BIOHAZARD UMBRELLA CHRONICLES SIDE A

“I saw the dead, both great & small, standing before God's throne.”: Revelations 20:12

Main Characters

• Captain Albert Wesker: Captain of the S.T.A.R.S. team, a special forces unit of the Raccoon City Police Department (RPD); involved in all biological projects.

• Rebecca Chambers: Rookie of the S.T.A.R.S. Bravo Team; expert for pharmaceuticals.

• Billy Coen: former US-Navy soldier (rank: Lieutenant); on death row until he got involved in an incident while being on prisoner transport.

• Jill Valentine: Member of the S.T.A.R.S. Alpha Team; essential for her team because of her expertise in disarming bombs and her strength.

• Chris Redfield: Member of the S.T.A.R.S. Alpha Team; former Air Force pilot, the best marksman of the team.

• Carlos Oliveira: Corporal of the Delta Platoon, Company A, of the Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service (U.B.C.S); skilled with weapons and vehicles of all kind.

Foreword

This story is about a shield; about a powerful, invisible shield called Umbrella. It is, of course, a purely hypothetical story. Some countries in this world are referred to as “rogue states.” They say that they support terrorism, and that they are both militarily

and economically placed under huge pressure. However, other countries are considered to be “developing a social network” and receive every assistance possible.

There are still many people who are foolish enough to believe that a clear dividing line differentiates the good from the bad, and the bad countries that are spawned by the good countries must be punished with a vengeance. These days, even a primary school child would know that such distinctions are completely arbitrary, and only on the basis of profit and power are these interests taken.

Who is good? Who is evil? Who has the power to decide? Groundwater, which, depending on how you see it, perhaps not even the 'good guys' can be counted.

Figuratively speaking, a cold, poisonous rain patters onto our world. Because of this poison rain, we are all dependent on a screen in order to survive. Anyone who has found a place under this umbrella can anticipate as much support as possible. But those who are not under this umbrella will be declared a rogue state.

The beginning of this legend was in 1967 in the tower room of an old castle. The castle was owned by Oswell E. Spencer, a Lord well known throughout Western European nobility. Lord Spencer had put parts of his castle under the disposal of a certain Dr. James Marcus, who had for many years been in the employment of a prestigious Swiss university.

Marcus was discovered at this university thanks to his research about the extinct earth-antiquity of microbes to a very interesting virus. However, there was a conflict of interests between different groups inside the institute, of which Marcus found himself once again on the losing side. This led to him being side-lined and relegated to a meaningless position. This was due to a scandal which involved falsified test results, with Marcus stood at the end of the line with no one to pass the buck onto, despite him having nothing to do with the whole affair. But even this was not the end of his losing streak. His previously very generous research grants, which came largely from public funds, were radically cut back. The university did not prevent him from continuing his research; however, they refused him any further financial support. This was a clear sign to Marcus that his days at the institute were numbered.

In a seemingly hopeless situation, Marcus contacted his old friend Spencer and pleaded with him for financial support. Spencer responded promptly. He first made inquiries about Marcus's research, and gave him an answer just a few days later. His offer was, however, subject to two conditions: First, Marcus would leave the university immediately. The Spencer foundation would occupy him with a much more generous salary than he had ever received from the university. Secondly, Marcus had to keep the final results of his research under strict secrecy. If these two conditions were met, Marcus would have state-of-the-art lab facilities at his disposal and a place to live. Any contacts with the outside world were to be avoided if possible.

Well, Marcus probably would not have made this pact with the devil were it not for the fact he could immediately continue his research.

Spencer's offer seemed very generous, he readily agreed. The two then employed another nobleman, a man named Edward Ashford. Marcus's future was now secured, his epoch-making research could continue.

On the day when Marcus finally reaped the fruits of his years of work on microbes, he ran around purple-faced through the laboratory and was excited as a teenager would be before his first date.

“Please understand me, Ashford! This discovery will shake the world! It is nothing less than the fulfillment of an ancient dream of humanity.”

“I sympathize with your feelings,” said Edward Ashford sleepily. He was slumped over his chair as he sat. “But to wake and get me up in the middle of the night from my sleep. What you believe, as I feel…”

“I beg you. Don't imagine it like that. After all, this is about a miracle. The discovery of a miracle.”

“You know…”

Ashford looked for a moment at the ceiling.

“What?”

“ Spencer is not here. He hates it if one bullies him. I am against, most probably too good-natured.”

“All right. Nevertheless, Ashford, you have to watch this! Here!”

Marcus brought the image of the scanning electron microscope on the monitor. The otherwise pitch-black screen showed some objects resembling rice grains with tails.

“Look closely,” he said with the pride of a boy showing his best friend his most valuable toy. “These are E.coli.”

Ashford was unimpressed. “Well, you may be surprised, but I actually recognize…”

“I've killed them with the help of 0.1 ppm of chlorine.”

“I understand. So you have woken me up in the middle of the night to show me a dozen dead E.coli?”

“Shush!”

Marcus put his finger to his lips and pointed to the screen.

With a very thin needle, something was injected into the nucleus of the dead coliform bacteria. Amazingly, the bacteria suddenly began to beat wildly in frenzy. More than that, they became longer and longer and eventually divided in the middle to form to separate parts.

“They divide, Ashford!”

Marcus had tears in his eyes. But Edward didn't seem to share his excitement in the least.

“Doctor…” Edward's voice indicated he was clearly annoyed. “It is surely not the first time that cells emerge from a state of apparent death and re-animate. Such a thing is even common in higher organisms, but…”

“Wrong, wrong,” interrupted Marcus, violently gesturing with his hands. “This is something completely different! These cells are not apparently dead! Their nuclei were

destroyed completely, their cells completely perforated. They were completely dead, completely dead. And then, after I gave them our aforementioned virus – you know the original virus already and implanted it – they began to grow and multiply again!"

On the screen, it was clearly visible, as the revival of the coli form of bacteria continued to increase with almost incredible speed. Edward stared at the image.

"Completely dead," he murmured thoughtfully.

"Exactly. Without a doubt. Why would I lie? And everything is described in this document!"

Marcus handed Edward a thick wad of paper.

"Should I read it all now?"

No. I will briefly explain it to you. You are not a layman. One look at the test results, and you would have understood what a remarkable thing this is. So, what you see here are the old drawings of an experiment in which the Miller Experiment of 1953 has been recreated here more or less. I have a glass beaker with methane, ammonia, hydrogen, and water vapour filled and hermetically sealed. Into this mix, I gave ten units of the original virus, which previously was killed with 1 ppm of chlorine. It has then been heated and exposed to an electrical discharge. Now, what do you believe was the outcome?"

"You've already told me. Basically, you have repeated the Miller experiment. I'm sorry, but the results of this experiment have been known for years."

"Listen to me! In principle, it is the Miller experiment. He has simulated a primitive atmosphere and provided evidence that life could form in this atmosphere of organic compounds. And from this arose, ultimately, life. This is, however, about something completely different! Well, to the point that from amino-acids and proteins, nucleic acids occur in both experiments. But in my case, the protein eventually becomes a structure with a membrane, which has begun to multiply by division."

"Impossible. That cannot be."

It was only natural that Edward steadfastly refused to believe Marcus. Simply because he had just claimed, no less that he had successfully recreated in the laboratory, the birth of life on Earth 3.8 billion years ago.

“ it's true. The full details of the experiment are described in detail in this paper. If you think that I am lying, just repeat it and examine it yourself. You can repeat it as many times as you like, the result will always be the same; the original virus causes the primitive DNA to arise from the protein soup.”

Edward wanted to believe it but still could not bring himself to. But the possibility that there may be something in this let the excitement from Marcus gradually skip over to him.

“ Are right, Marcus. We should tell Spencer.”

“Finally! Finally, you understand!” Cried Marcus as Edward grabbed his right hand, beaming.

“Let us go immediately to Spencer.” Edward threw his overcoat over himself and took Marcus, still wearing his white lab coat, in tow. It was a memorable night. And the events of that night would finally lead towards the creation of the Umbrella Corporation.

The Ecliptic Express Incident 1

The young woman propped her elbow on the open side window of the car and sighed. How could she have been so naive? She should have known, ever since that guy had picked the Arklay Mountains of all things for their romantic little trip. Another one of those morons on the lookout for a quickie. He didn't give a damn about her or her feelings.

She heaved another weary sigh. That guy was an idiot. Without the slightest chance of improvement.

First there had been this seemingly endless ride and then the engine had choked off in the middle of the woods. And even before their first kiss! He had walked off right away to get to the next gas station, but she was sure that it would take him at least two hours to get back to the car. Two hours. Goddamn two hours! With another deep sigh, she glanced at her watch. It seemed that all she could do was wait.

The moment he came back, she would ask him to take her home. Sure, it was still early, but it just appeared a waste of time to spend even one more minute with that loser. How could she have ever fallen for that stupid pick-up line of his and ended up in this godforsaken place? Well, the answer was really quite simple: it was all because Jeff didn't seem to take much interest in her as of late. There have been all those quarrels and arguments between them so she had taken this opportunity to stir up his jealousy when it presented itself. Yes, that's why she was here right now. But why in the world had it to be with such a loser?

Something tore her away from her thoughts. She glanced into the rearview mirror and noticed a dark shape advancing on the parked car. Finally, she thought, he's back. She didn't turn in her seat, though; she didn't want to give him the impression that she had eagerly awaited his return. Instead, and just to get her low opinion of his attitude across to him, she kept her gaze on the mirror.

That's odd.

Something about his walk seemed strange. With every shuffling step, he took his torso swayed from side to side and his head lolled like the head of a newborn.

What's wrong with him? He walks like a zombie right out of some horror movie …

No need to panic; it was him alright. She recognized his T-shirt and jeans, and above all his stupid winged cap that somehow made him look like some weird angel. No doubt it was him. Slowly, very slowly, he advanced on the car.

What does he want, scare me? After leaving me sitting around here in the woods for goddamn two hours?

“ It, dammit” the young woman exclaimed, her voice raised. “First you ran out of gas and let me wait here in the dark for hours, and then you try to pull that zombie act on me! Thanks, jerk, I've had enough! You take me back to town right now! I'm hungry, you know, and I'm going to grab something to eat. Without you! You spoil my appetite …”

And I know you're just as hungry as me, she thought, suit yourself.

The shambling figure came close to the car, its hands reached through the open window and forcefully gripped the head of the woman. It took one bite to rip the pale skin on her neck open and tear it to shreds. Like a fountain, the blood from her artery splattered the interior of the car.

The Ecliptic Express Incident 2

“! Man down” someone hollered nearby.

“I'm no god-damn medic”, Rebecca Chambers mumbled to herself and took off. She and her comrades of S.T.A.R.S Bravo team — a special forces unit of the RPD — had been on their way with their helicopter through the Arklay Mountains to investigate a series of bizarre murder cases. These cases had lately occurred in this area. Tonight the weather had been dreadful and proven less than favourable for a chopper mission. Like some sinister omen of an oncoming apocalypse, the dark storm clouds still hung over the mountain ridge, stray lightning occasionally illuminating the sky. And as if that hadn't been enough, a sudden gust of wind had sent their trusted chopper spinning, forcing them to make an emergency landing somewhere in the pathless area of the Arklay Mountains.

“Medic! Over here!”

A grinning, sturdy-built man waved Rebecca over to join him. It was Edward Dewey, one of Rebecca's senior teammates in Bravo.

“I'm no medic, I'm Rear Security!” she hissed, kneeling beside Edward.

Though tending to the wounded was part of her duty as RS, it was by far not all. Bringing up the rear, sentry duty and even sniper missions belonged to her area of responsibility. Being a simple medic or army doctor left you with purely medical tasks, while RS meant actively handling combat situations.

“Listen, kiddo, I've just lost my right arm!”

“I bet you'll be as right as rain once you stop hiding it behind your back,” Rebecca coolly replied. Compared to Edward — a guy who looked like he could easily wrestle down a grizzly bear — she looked like a school girl who just happened to be here by accident.

“Dewey, this is hardly the right time to make fun of the rookie!” the Captain warned.

Edward just shrugged. He was an RS, like Rebecca.

“, report.” Enrico Marini, Captain of Bravo team, obviously had some difficulty to make himself heard over the wind and the pattering of the rain all around them.

“ alright, sir,” Rebecca replied. Which was a bit of a miracle, really. Despite the stormy weather and total darkness, the helicopter's pilot had managed a storybook emergency landing: the bird was still in one piece, had not crashed into any of the trees or got smashed in some canyon. All members of Bravo team had made it safely out of the chopper and now looked almost as relaxed as a bunch of boy scouts in summer camp.

“Alright people, now listen up!” the Captain shouted while looking sternly at each of his team members. “Thanks to our excellent RPD pilot, we're all alive and in one piece. But that's no reason to get overly optimistic about our situation. We're in the middle of the mountains, it's dark, and this damn storm is not making things any easier. So don't you get too cocky; one mistake could put the whole team in danger.”

The Bravos listened to the words of their captain just like small boys getting told off by their father. Marini knew that he could trust each one of them with his life. Together,

they had gone through countless dangerous missions, and somehow he considered them his family, his children.

“Now, our chopper has gone down in area 'Romeo'. Those mysterious murders, on the other hand, happened in the vicinity of an old mansion southwest from our current location. Since air recon is out of the question, Bravo team is going to search the specified area on foot. Starting now.” At this point, Marini turned towards the stricken helicopter. “Dooley! Radio communication is down, so headquarters is likely going to send a search and rescue team. You'll stay here in case they find the crash site.” The captain took a brief glance at his watch. “We'll be back in two hours. Alright, everyone! You know the drill. Let's go!”

Bravo Team disappeared into the dark forest, icy rain pelting down on them like a biblical plague.

But none of these hardened elite soldiers cared. This whole mission was nothing more than their usual job, plain and simple. Of course, none of them -including Rebecca — knew what kind of terrors this night would have in store for them.

Wesker 1

Around the same time, two men were engrossed in a discussion at the exact place where said terrors would originate from. One of them was tall and wearing sunglasses. The other wore a white lab coat and a tie that hung loosely around his neck, giving him an all over scruffy look. Something about him seemed to scream 'hospital'. The two of them were standing in front of a row of monitors.

“Dammit, the whole world swims in shit these days! Shit running around, shit laughing you in the face, shit lying to you and shitfaced assholes who make your life a living hell. And you can try all you like: the shit's just not backing down!” The man in the lab coat grimaced, a clearly disgusted expression adorning his features.

“Yeah, right,” the guy with the sunglasses said, obviously not interested in the other's rant.

“With the technology we developed here, we're at least able to find some use for the goddamn scum out there. Don't you think, Wesker?”

Wesker didn't answer. He kept his expression perfectly blank, which seemed to irritate William Birkin, the man in the lab coat. His voice grew louder and almost beseeching.

“When you use shit as fertilizer, you get excellent soil and therefor a good harvest. That's exactly what we did! We used the scum as fertilizer. That's what all this is about! That's what all our research was for!” Birkin had talked himself into a rage and was now getting off his chair. “That was my mission: to turn this shit-encrusted world into a better place!”

Wesker clapped his hands mockingly.

“Are you making fun of me?”

“On the contrary, Birkin, I think you're a genius.” This was obviously just some cheap and rather cynical flattery, but Birkin's face lit up immediately. “Unfortunately, there is one major problem with geniuses like yourself,” Wesker added.

“And that is?”

“

“Oh really? I am absolutely aware of reality,” Birkin answered, sounding a bit like a sulking school boy.

“Then what exactly is this?”

Wesker pointed at the row of monitors in front of them. The flickering screens showed different parts of a vast research lab, every room devoid of human life. There were human-shaped figures, shambling around aimlessly, but no real humans in the true sense of the word. They dragged their almost ripped off arms behind them, trudging awkwardly around on stiff legs which joints had seized to function hours ago, and their

cracked open skulls offered an interesting view at their dull grey brains. These creatures were not human anymore, they were dead. The walking dead. Restlessly, they were wandering the empty rooms and hallways of the lab area. The floor beneath their rotted feet was alive, though. On the monitors, it looked like thousands of fat rodents scuttling this way and that, but a closer look revealed that those moving creatures weren't even mammals: they were leeches. Huge, slimy leeches that crawled on every surface, floor, walls, and ceiling.

“So, Dr Birkin, what do you call that?”

“This is bad. Really bad …”

“And what are you going to do about it?”

“Wait a second, don't act like you've got nothing to do with this! You're just as responsible for this as I am. What am I saying? All this is mainly your fault!”

“Go on.”

“And therefore … therefore you should finally start taking said responsibility and do something about all this.”

“I intend to. But what's your plan?”

“I … don't know. I really don't know.” Birkin slumped back in his chair, burying his face in his hands. Images of a silent hell kept flickering across the row of monitors in front of him.

The Ecliptic Express Incident 3

At exactly 11:02 pm, Bravo Team discovered an overturned vehicle, including the mutilated corpses of several MP Officers. Documents found on site stated that they had been on their way to deliver a prisoner to a nearby military base where said prisoner, one Lt. Billy Coen, was supposed to be executed. He had been found guilty of killing 23 civilians during an anti-guerrilla-operation and since his body was not among those

of his keepers he was now officially a fugitive. Captain Marini immediately ordered his team to start searching for Coen. Somehow, the prospect of having to deal with a known enemy instead of a faceless (and maybe even non-existent) serial killer roaming the Arklay Mountains helped lift the spirits of all team members.

Marini made them fan out in groups of two, and soon they took up pursuit, following the trail of blood through the dark and wet forest.

Rebecca had teamed up with her training instructor, Richard Aiken. This search through dark woods turned out to be quite a challenge, especially for her sense of direction. The Arklay Mountains were famous for their dense and almost impenetrable undergrowth and for that very reason, Rebecca soon lost sight of her partner, her inexperience with outdoor missions like these suddenly becoming all too clear. There was of course a simple rule for situations like this: stay where you are. And technically, she was well aware of that rule. Technically. But in a sudden rush of panic, she started off again through the forest.

And then after a while she came upon the train. A train standing in the woods in the middle of the rainy night, on tracks that vanished in both directions into the gloom, its windows smashed. It looked like a giant mortally wounded animal.

Maybe there's been an accident, Rebecca thought. Or maybe it's something related to those recent murders?

“Is anybody there?” the young Bravo shouted, but no response came. And then she saw movement inside one of the cars. She set out again and slipped through a half-open door into that car, acting more on reflex than anything else. Dead silence greeted her.

A peculiar smell reached her nose, definitely not a good one. The damp air the wind outside pressed through the broken window panes carried the faint odour of blood.

“Raccoon City Police! Is anybody there?!” Rebecca shouted again, straining to make her voice heard over the patter of rain. But there was still no response. “Anybody?”

No answer. The shadows surrounding her seemed to swallow Rebecca's voice. It was at that moment that she sensed the presence of someone behind her, and she wheeled

around. There, at the passage to the next car, stood an odd-looking figure shrouded in semi-darkness.

“My … my name is Rebecca Chambers, Raccoon City Police Department …”

The figure started to shuffle closer. It was a man, and he was deathly pale, baring his teeth at her. The reason for his ghostly pallor soon became obvious: the throat beneath his face was ripped to shreds.

“My name's Rebecca Chambers, are you …?” Rebecca paused, her eyes travelling back to the ghastly wound. Torn sinews and blood vessels dangled from the man's throat. Nobody could survive a wound like that. Never! But the figure was still moving towards her, awkwardly shambling like this was the first time it had ever used its legs. It moved closer and closer. And Rebecca started to back off. This was answered by a bizarre groan from the strange creature, and murky white saliva began seeping from its mouth and dripping from its chin.

“S-stop right there! Freeze!”

Rebecca drew her gun out of its holster, pointing it at the figure. It was standing so close to her now that she could smell it. The sickly sweet stench of decay. I know what this is, she thought, still backing off, I have seen this before. In movies. Zombie movies. This is a zombie. But … how?!

Suddenly, all the previous sluggishness seemed to drop away from the creature, and it lunged at her with outstretched arms, ignoring the fact that the muzzle of a gun was pointing at its face. But Rebecca had never shot at a human being before, and her finger lay useless and limb over the trigger.

A monster, this is just a monster, not human, just a monster, Rebecca repeated to herself, struggling against the rising panic, but she couldn't find the strength to pull the trigger.

And then the creature grabbed her shoulders, pulled her close. The gaping mouth approached her throat, slobbering and slavering. The stench of decay and excrement rolled over Rebecca in nauseating waves.

This … thing wants to eat me!

Finally, Rebecca managed to pull the trigger and the muffled report of the gun filled the interior with the car, its muzzle pointing at the creature's stomach. The grip on Rebecca's shoulders loosened as the figure stumbled backwards. She fired again. And again. The bullets ripped through flesh and intestines, tearing pieces from the decaying body, and the stench grew almost unbearable. The monster stumbled again but refused to go down.

After three hits with 9 mm hollow-point bullets!

Now there was no more doubt that Rebecca was up against a real zombie here. And you couldn't kill a zombie with just one hit. The young Bravo member chided herself for not having shot earlier, and now she pulled the trigger again and again, until she realized that she had gone through a whole clip. The creature was still standing upright, making another shuffling move towards her, as if nothing had happened.

Okay … so maybe you have to go for the head, Rebecca thought, the useless gun at the ready. She felt her mind working slowly, too slowly, and in her current state it took her much too long to come to that one crucial conclusion.

I have to run.

Only it was already too late. With gaping jaws, the undead creature made another attempt to tear Rebecca's throat to shreds. And then there came a shot. Like an overripe pumpkin, the head of the zombie exploded, and the whole body folded up and sank to the floor.

Rebecca turned around. She was now facing a tall young man, his muscular torso giving him the air of a big cat poised to attack. There was a certain feel of danger about him. His right arm sported an elaborate black tribal tattoo, but Rebecca was much more absorbed by the huge gun in his left hand.

“Who …?”

“Billy Coen, doll-face.”

“Don't call me doll-face.”

Rebecca ejected the empty clip from her gun and reloaded, then pointed it back at Billy. She was almost a little relieved to have found another human being.

“So you're the one who escaped from the MP's.”

“Looks that way, doesn't it?”

“Then you can consider yourself arrested.”

“Can we chat about that later? I'm a bit busy right now …” Billy raised his gun.

Before Rebecca could say another word, a shot rang out. For a second or two Rebecca thought she was about to die, that she had been gunned down, but the bullet had flashed past her and had hit something behind her with a loud smacking sound. She wheeled around only to see half a dozen walking corpses lurching towards her from the passageway to the next car. She let out a strangled cry and backed away until her path was blocked by Billy's broad chest.

“What are these … things?”

“Zombies, I guess,” Billy answered. His arm came into view as he pointed his gun past her face and pulled the trigger. Twice. Three times. With every bullet he fired, a zombie was thrown to the floor, not to get up again. Billy delivered precise head-shots to the horde of shuffling creatures but it was no use. There were just too many of them.

“We better get out of here! Now!” Rebecca urged and grabbed Billy's hand.

“Too late for that.”

“What?”

“See for yourself.”

He pointed at one of the smashed windows, where the rain poured into the car. Outside in the forest, the dark trees were moving. But of course, it was not really the trees that were moving.

“The train's moving!”

“Exactly.”

Like ants swarming from an anthill, more and more zombies appeared, only to be thrown back by the bullets from Billy's gun. He really had his hands full. Rebecca raised her weapon.

“Anyway, we need to get away from here.”

They began moving towards the front of the train while trying to decimate the numbers of zombies still coming from the next car.

“Aim for their heads!” Billy shouted.

“I know,” Rebecca replied.

“Then why don't you do it?”

“I'm trying. I'm not so good at shooting.”

“No shit. And what are you good at?”

Rebecca said nothing.

“Okay, alright, never-mind.” Billy said.

“Just where exactly are we going?”

“To the front of the train.”

“Why?”

“To stop the train.”

“I see. But you are aware that I'm going to arrest you after that?”

“Absolutely. And now shut up.”

“How dare you … Hey, you missed that one crouching behind the seat over there!”

“Just shoot him yourself!”

“I'm trying. I can't get a clear shot.”

“You're wasting ammo.”

“I don't mean to … “ Rebecca glanced briefly into the next car. “What … in the world …?”

For a moment, she was speechless.

The car they now entered was completely black. The walls, the ceiling, the floor, the seats, everything was gleaming in greasy black. And the black mass moved like it was alive, consisting of countless small writhing creatures.

“Slugs,” Rebecca murmured.

“No. It's …”

Suddenly, the black sea in front of them boiled up, and a massive blob came soaring through the air.

“… Leeches!” Billy screamed and with a deft move of his knife he cut the slimy black creature in half before it could reach his face with its Y-shaped mouth and its hundreds of sharp needle-like teeth, ready for a kiss … It had been a close call.

A panicked scream almost escaped Rebecca's lips when she saw that the leeches, each one about the size of a human foot, had turned around simultaneously. It was as if the monstrous creatures were regarding Rebecca and Billy blindly. And then, only a second later, the black mass came at them like a pile of wriggling stinking excrement.

Wesker 2

“That must be the ghost of Dr. Marcus,” Birkin murmured, a grim expression on his face. “He's come to take revenge.”

“You don't say,” Wesker said dryly.

“Are you telling me you're not afraid?”

“Why should I? It's just another monster.”

“Yes, but …”

“Is that your guilty conscience rearing its ugly head?”

“Maybe.”

“There's no reason. All you did was stamping on a pile of shit.”

“Marcus was … he wasn't just a pile of shit.”

“Are you feeling sorry for him?”

“I … respected him. He discovered the Progenitor Virus after all. And he developed the t-virus which we're working on now.”

“Then why did you kill him?”

“But that's not true! You killed him!”

“Let's just say you haven't been an innocent bystander during the whole affair.”

“I know. And that's why …”

“And that's why you're scared shitless.”

Birkin just nodded and buried his face in his hands.

“Bullshit!” Wesker snarled.

Birkin gave him a sullen look. “And why is that bullshit to you?”

“For our part, Marcus was nothing but a nuisance, that's why we eliminated him. Thoroughly, I might add. That's how you deal with your enemies, there's nothing to it. And we succeeded, Marcus is gone. That thing, that's not Marcus, that's just some

monster. No need to go after it. It's going to die anyway sooner or later, just like Marcus' beloved little private zoo …" Wesker looked down on Birkin who himself stared dejectedly at the floor. The sunglasses hid the taller man's expression, but the cold disdain in his eyes was still noticeable. "Do you honestly believe that there is something super-natural going on here? That this thing is some kind of ghost?"

Birkin said nothing.

"That's bullshit, Birkin. You're delusional."

"B-but … are you sure we …"

"Yes. We killed him. Period. No-one survives a bullet through the head."

"That's exactly why I think it must be his ghost …"

A forced smile flitted across Wesker's features. "Alright Birkin, I'll explain it to you. Do you remember the spot where he went down after I put that hole in his head?"

"His desk. Where he conducted his experiments …"

"Good. And maybe you'll also remember that standing on that very desk was a glass jar containing a leech, a leech whose DNA Marcus had altered with the Progenitor Virus."

"I remember … yes, now I understand …"

"Good for you."

"But, that would mean …" Birkin's voice faltered, so Wesker continued.

"Just before he died, Marcus thrashed around, smashing most of the things on his desk, including the glass jar. The leech came free and when Marcus finally died it fell from the desk onto his body, onto his head to be precise. His head which -if you remember — had popped like a cherry."

Birkin gave a disgusted little groan as if he were reliving the past events in all their horrific glory.

"And there, on Marcus' burst scull, the Progenitor Virus had set to work."

“So … that makes him a zombie?”

“Oh no, he's more than that. This monster seems to be of high intelligence, something you would never find in a zombie. And apart from that, it had taken the virus ten years to resurrect its host's body, which is far longer than it would take to turn someone into a mere zombie. I've got my theory: presumably the leech, affected by the Progenitor Virus, has assimilated Marcus' cerebral functions and has repaired dead or missing parts of the body, thus remodelling it over a large period of time. That's why it has Marcus' memories but it definitely is something else entirely. The Marcus we both knew, the one who could get in our way, he's dead and gone.”

“Interesting. Most interesting.”

Birkin looked up. There was a peculiar gleam in his eyes, like the eyes of a child who had been given a new toy.

“So there's no need to fear, Birkin. He's a test subject like all the others. And he fits so neatly into our current research to develop the ultimate biologic weapon. I don't understand why you keep seeing the ghost of a dead man in the light of all the assembled facts.”

“You're right. You're absolutely right. I've just been too nervous, that's all. Won't happen again. So … Where are you, Marcus? Come out, come out, wherever you are …”

Birkin started pressing buttons on the controls in front of him enthusiastically, the pictures on the monitors flickering from one surveillance camera to the next.

The Ecliptic Express Incident 4

“I've seen people doing this in movies, you know? Running around on the roof of a train? I never thought it would happen to me, though.” Rebecca had to scream to make herself heard over the storm and pouring rain.

Rebecca and Billy had managed to escape from the leech-infested car and had at some point climbed through a hole in the roof.

“I must say it looks a lot easier in the movies,” Rebecca continued. “I can't even keep upright here. How do those movie heroes do it?”

The young police officer had squatted down on the car's roof like a spider and kept crawling on, inch by inch. Up ahead a shot rang out. Billy looked back at her, and his strained pose reminded her of an ancient ninja warrior just before a fight.

“What was that?”

“Another zombie had been hiding over there,” Billy answered, locking eyes with her. “Tell me, are you afraid that I might mistake you for a zombie, or why do you keep babbling?”

“You're so mean! How can you …?”

But Billy didn't even hear the rest of the sentence. He had sensed movement and turned to look straight ahead again, pulling the trigger a second later.

“Is there …?”

A shot rang out. And another.

“… what?!”

Boom. Boom. Boom.

“Leeches!” Billy screamed.

Rebecca started visibly. But after a second, she grabbed her combat knife and began stabbing at the coiling masses of leeches. She was much better at handling her knife than her side-arm and did exactly what she had been taught at military training. Unfortunately her deft movements made her leave her crouched position on the roof and a moment later a gust of wind almost sent her flying.

“We better get back inside!” Billy shouted. “Maybe it's a bit quieter in one of the other cars.”

Soon they found an open crack between two cars where they could climb back into the train.

“Hey, wait for me!” Rebecca had to struggle to keep up with him. Once they were back inside and finally save from the wind and rain, an almost unreal silence greeted them. No more monsters were in sight. When she realized that they were now standing directly in front of the driver's cab, Rebecca heaved a sigh of relief.

“About time. I could really need a break,” she said stepping closer to Billy who still kept his weapon at the ready and a tense expression on his face.

“I wanna know what's going on here,” she continued, but Billy ignored her. And Rebecca ignored him ignoring her.

“Corpses. Walking corpses. Dead and decaying. But why can they still move? And then those leeches! I have never seen leeches that big before! I mean, they were huge! I really wanna know what the hell is going on here!”

“When you're under attack you don't ask questions. You shoot. And save your questions for later.” Billy answered.

“Maybe. But anyway, it strikes me as odd when someone is attacked by living corpses and obviously hasn't got the slightest problem with that.”

“Can you shut up please?”

“No, I can't.”

“Yes, you can! Just stop babbling!”

“I'm just … scared, you know? I'm scared that when I stop talking, I won't be able to take one step further through this nightmare.”

“If you can't walk, just say it. I can give you a piggyback when I get out of here.”

“Um … thanks. Too kind.”

“And now shut your trap.”

“Alright,” Rebecca said and then pressed her lips firmly together.

“…”

She shook her head. “Dammit, I can't do this. So anyway, how come you ended up here?”

“They transferred me to some other prison and on the road we got attacked by those monsters. The vehicle got knocked over. All the guards were killed.”

Rebecca glanced at Billy skeptically. “You mean you weren't responsible for the deaths of those men?”

“Do you really believe that I single-handedly knocked over a police van and bit all the officers to death?!”

“Granted, that would have been a bit strange …”

She gave him a scrutinizing look, remembering the state of that MP vehicle from earlier. And the bodies lying next to it. Brutally mutilated bodies, maimed beyond recognition, and no indication that a weapon of some kind had been used. And she was supposed to believe this to be the work of a man who tried to escape? No. Even if Billy had had all the time in the world … No human being could have done something like that … Although, what if it had been the work of a sadistic killer, who had already butchered 23 civilians?

“While I was running away from those creatures I stumbled upon this train. And that's it.”

“But why didn't you wait for help? You must've been aware that you would be considered a fugitive if you left that vehicle.”

“Just as I said: those creatures were after me. What was I supposed to do? Wait around and get torn to pieces?”

“True … um, may I ask you something?”

“If you make it short.”

“Tell me … are you really a criminal? Somehow you don't strike me as someone capable of murdering 23 people.”

“I don't know who you trust, but I know who I trust. And that's myself.”

“Hm, alright, then I'm going to trust my judgment. But anyway, it doesn't really matter now. We don't have any other choice, we have to work together … what …?”

The roof of the car sagged with a creaking sound.

That hole in the roof back there … how did it get there? Something must have caused it …

Suddenly the roof caved in above them and a creature, different and more terrifying than anything they had encountered so far, bore down on them, wielding massive spiked claws. Anything caught between those huge things would get turned into mince in a matter of seconds.

“What the hell …?!”

This time even Billy was speechless. Without taking her eyes off the creature, Rebecca raised her weapon.

The monster had a curved tail with a giant pointed stinger on its end.

“A scorpion?”

Even while asking, Rebecca pulled the trigger, making the gun spit fire. There was a short metallic clank.

The bullet had obviously ricocheted off the creature's armoured outer skin. One of its claws already tried to stab at Billy, who took a desperate leap behind one of the well-cushioned benches. He watched as the bench behind him was crushed a second

later. Those claws didn't cut their victim: they squashed it. Unbelievable forces were at work here.

While Billy and Rebecca tried to avoid the scorpion's attack, they fired away at the creature, but neither of them could manage to even make a scratch on its skin.

“I got it!” Billy suddenly shouted.

“What?!” Rebecca screamed against the blast of her gun.

“Aim for the head!” He had already started to direct his bullets exactly there.

Rebecca immediately pointed her gun at the scorpion's bizarre head, but somehow the creature managed to ward her bullets off with its claws.

“You know what?”

“What?”

“I think it's trying to protect itself.”

“Yeah, I think it does.”

“Well, it wasn't doing that before. No matter where we shot it. Because it has this thick amour everywhere. Except on its head. That's why it's using its claws to protect itself.”

“…”

“Watch out!”

One of the claws rushed towards Billy and the ex-marine had to duck quickly beneath it. As if by magic, he came up right in front of the giant scorpion's mouth and pressed the muzzle of his gun against its head. Before the claws could reach him to tear him to pieces, he had unloaded a whole clip into the creature's head. As a result the claws froze in midair and then clattered to the floor. The legs crumbled beneath the armoured body as it sank trembling onto the wooden boards.

“It's over.”

Rebecca turned around just in time to see the tail of the allegedly dead scorpion rise and the stinger rush with terrible speed at Billy. The ex-marine hit the floor at the last possible moment so that the stinger did nothing more but scrape along his arm before it buried itself into the floor. And then it really was over. The monster was dead.

“Are you okay?” Rebecca asked and helped Billy back to his feet.

“Thanks.”

“For a homicidal lunatic, you got pretty good manners. Oh, you're bleeding.”

Rebecca pulled a cloth from her side-pack and dressed the wound on his arm.

“Does it hurt?”

Billy just shrugged.

“You feel nauseous or cold?”

Billy shook his head.

“Show me your hands.”

Billy did as he was told and presented his hands to her.

“No sign of paralysis or spasms. I think you're gonna be fine.”

“Hey, you're a medic or what?”

“No. I'm rear security and quite an expert on chemicals.”

“An expert. Okay, and what does the expert say about this?”

He pointed at the empty driver's cabin before them. The seat at the controls was unoccupied, and it looked like no-one had sat in it for quite some time.

“You know I heard this story: the Umbrella Corporation owns this luxury train which takes their personnel all the way from the city to some management training facility

somewhere in the Arklay mountains. They own the tracks and everything. And the train is computer-controlled. Must be this train we're on."

"Umbrella? You mean that pharmaceutical company?"

"Exactly. That big global conglomerate. They're not only into pharmaceuticals but also into every field of biotechnology."

"I'm afraid we won't find out where this train is really heading."

The door to the next car slammed open and a horde of zombies came bursting in, arms stretched out at them hungrily. They were getting into each other's way, so at first only a few of them made it over the doorstep. Billy began to take down the ones in the front, working his way through them, firing bullet after bullet.

"Keep them off my back, will you?" Rebecca shouted while claiming the seat in the driver's cabin. From her pocket she took a small amount of a clay-like substance. It was a brick of plastic explosive and she planted it firmly onto the controls of the train.

"Fifteen seconds should be enough," she murmured to herself, and attached the proper length of fuse to the explosive. A second later the fuse was burning.

"Fifteen. Fourteen. Thirteen …" Rebecca stepped out of the driver's cabin and reunited with Billy. "Eleven! I placed a bomb in there. Ten …"

"What?!"

"Nine more seconds before it goes Boom! Eight! Seven …"

"You gotta be kidding me!"

The zombies still came pushing into the car. Rebecca took up position next to Billy and opened fire.

"Four! Three! Two! Take cover! One! -- NOW!!!" At the last possible moment the two dove for cover behind the car's benches. Rebecca had timed the detonation precisely with just the right amount of explosives. She felt the thunderous roar and the following shock-wave hitting her even in her crouched position. A wall of flames came rushing

down the car, consuming anything in its wake. And then the emergency brakes of the train kicked in. It was an automatic fail-safe designed to bring the train to an immediate hold if necessary.

The shock-wave and the fire had already put a damper on the zombies' assault and now the sudden stop made them tumble all over themselves and knocked them around in the car. An ear-splitting shrieking sound echoed through the train, it was like the brakes were screaming for help.

We'll jump the tracks, Rebecca thought while the aftershocks of the explosion still reverberated through her body.

The zombies got strewn all over the car but that didn't keep them from trying to grab at their prey. Rebecca and Billy set to work with their knifes to diminish their enemies' numbers when suddenly they noticed that the train had actually stopped.

“Let's go!” Billy jumped up and grabbed Rebecca by the hand to drag her with him but she just stayed where she were, rooted to the spot.

“Edward …”

At the front of the zombie horde, a man came stumbling at them, a man she knew very well. A man in an S.T.A.R.S. uniform. It was no other than Rebecca's fellow Bravo teammate, Edward Dewey. So apart from her other S.T.A.R.S. members had found this train before it had started its journey. And as sure as this was Edward Dewey, it was just as obvious that he was dead. His stomach had been ripped open and his intestines were hanging out of the gaping wound. Rebecca couldn't move and just kept staring at him.

“Stop that bullshit, will you?” she said, struck by the wild hope that this was somehow a joke, as she took a step towards him. “I warning you, Edward, this time I won't let you get off that easy.” She smiled. Acting like a zombie in this kind of situation was so much like Edward, wasn't it? Wasn't it? Unfortunately and anyway you looked at it: what was standing there before her was a walking corpse, grunting like a wild animal.

“Edward, that's enough …”

She took another step towards him but then the report of a gun made her stop. A perfectly round hole had appeared on Edward's forehead, and blood and brain matter got propelled out of the back of his skull. Released from his misery the S.T.A.R.S. member fell to the floor.

“What do you think you're doing?!” Rebecca screamed, turning on Billy. “You killed him! You're a murderer! A murderer!”

She started hammering her fists on Billy's broad chest again and again and as hard as she could. It was the shock of course, the shock of seeing her teammate lurching around as a zombie, the man who joked around with her only hours ago. Billy made no move to stop her. He ignored her while he kept shooting at the zombies that were still approaching them. Then he grabbed Rebecca's arm.

“Let's get out of here!”

A loud sob escaped Rebecca's lips and she started crying like a child. She knew it. She knew that there wouldn't have been any help for Edward. No, death was his only salvation.

Billy finally dragged her out of the train into the night.

Wesker 3

“Who is afraid of Marcus? Nobody…”, Dr. Birkin hummed while he worked the monitors. Beside him, Wesker had settled on the chair, but appeared to be neither interested in the monitors nor the boisterous and merry-looking Birkin.

“He is nowhere to be seen. So he bailed.”

The monitors continued to show constant changes in live images from all corners of the Umbrella Executive Training School. Judging by these pictures, the training centre was a kind of haunted house in a way, which was teeming with ogres and monsters.

The first director of the training centre for future high-level personnel of the Umbrella Corporation had been just that, Dr. James Marcus. But before more detail can be revealed on the fate of the ill-fated scientist, it is necessary to say a few words about the international conglomerate Umbrella.

Everything began with the discovery of the “Progenitor Virus” in 1967. This discovery was one of the reasons for the rapid growth of Umbrella. It has to be assumed that this virus in ancient times made a crucial contribution to the emergence of life and death on earth. In other words, this original virus was the answer to the question of questions, a question whose answer has fascinated scientists for centuries; the question of the origins of life.

In any case, the virus had the ability to mix genetic information to cause unique mutations. And it possessed the ability to transfer these altered genes into other organisms by infecting it and causing a fresh spontaneous mutation. This ability to transfer to spontaneous mutation functioned both between whole individuals and between individual cells. The original virus was one of the great discoveries of the century, but hardly anyone took any notice. And nowhere were the facts of this discovery ever published. But why?

Behind this wondrous discovery stood three men. Oswell E. Spencer, a famous noble, Edward Ashford, also noble, and Dr. James Marcus, Spencer's friend from university times. Lord Spencer was the most inhuman man, which you can imagine. Although blessed from birth with wealth and prestige, he still suffered from a painful ambition, an insatiable greed for more. Spencer dreamed of ruling over everything and everyone. The whole world he wanted for himself. Anything less, simply would not satisfy him. Of the three, Spencer was the only one who really understood the potential power of the Progenitor Virus over mankind. And it was only logical that he instigated the launching of Umbrella Corporation in order to feed his hunger for power. This differentiated his thinking and his attitude from the outset in principle to Ashford, who was concerned only about the reputation of his family, or from Marcus, who wanted simply to pursue his research with a vigour.

After its establishment, the Umbrella Corporation gave itself to the outside world the appearance of a globally operating pharmaceutical company. But secretly, with the help of the research on the Progenitor Virus they could significantly advance in the field of biological weaponry. Spencer's first goal was to dominate the arms market. In fact, the Umbrella Corporation grew like wildfire to a considerable size. This rapid growth had been fuelled mainly by the political power of the original virus as the ultimate threat.

While Marcus was one of the discoverers of the original virus, the rapid growth in size and power of Umbrella meant he was soon pushed to the side-lines. Power struggles and plots had never been one of his strengths. Spencer, however, was a true expert in fighting with hooks and eyes, and had an easy time dealing with Marcus. Almost overnight, Marcus was pulled out of all the company's planning and shifted to the post of Director of the company's own training centre. The scientist immediately realized that this was done to remove him from the power centre of the group. But he never fought against his transfer because he knew he could gain something positive from it after all: There, in this remote training centre in the woods, it would easily be possible to evade control by the central office and work quietly on his research. In a sense, therefore, Marcus was even grateful to Spencer for this transfer.

In his new workplace, Marcus worked diligently to create a new bio-genetic weapon by implanting leeches with the original Progenitor Virus. In addition, he devoted himself to the development of the T-Virus, an improved version of the original virus. That this would ultimately also benefit Spencer, Marcus was well aware, but he did not directly scruple to create a weapon. He was also still fascinated by the possibilities of the original virus.

For Marcus, his time as Director of the training centre was happy, as his goal had always been to explore and discover new things. Secretly he hoped to find something spectacular, and thanks to these new discoveries finally earn Spencer's true recognition, and then with his honour restored, he could return to his rightful place at the centre of the company. But once the T-Virus was finally completed, Marcus discovered that he was, to Spencer, just a pawn in the game all along. The ominous came without warning. Marcus was approached one day in his lab by Albert Wesker and William Birkin; - two

employees whom he trusted completely – and was murdered by them. The two were acting under the direct orders of Spencer.

Now ten years later, Birkin and Wesker were planning the reactivation of the training centre and had returned there. But at the place of their crime they found Marcus' "ghost" and all kinds of angry monsters in response. No wonder Birkin was frightened at the sights on the screens. Again and again was "Dr. Marcus of that time" spotted on the monitors, as well as several bioweapons created by Marcus in the form of leeches and other creatures.

"Well…" Birkin was irritated. "Look at the time, Wesker!"

Birkin pointed to one of the monitors. There, two people were seen. A young couple, but no doubt that it was not a romantic rendezvous which had brought them to this place, both were armed.

"Well, well, this is amusing." Wesker, whose interest had suddenly been reawakened, got up from his chair.

"The woman is a member of S.T.A.R.S… Rebecca Chambers is her name. I do not know the man. Looks like Bravo Team got lost here. I wonder if they took the Ecliptic Express?"

"You know the woman?"

"She works for me."

"And what do we do now?"

Wesker shrugged his shoulders.

What do you mean…" Birkin began looking from camera to camera. While he worked on the keyboard of the control panel, he sang his strange little song.

"Who's afraid of Marcus? Nobody, nobody…"

The Ecliptic Express Incident 5

Rebecca and Billy had jumped off the burning train and vanished into the darkness of the woods. There were monsters everywhere. First they crossed paths with a giant black dog who followed them persistently like a real hellhound would. Its body was apparently rotting, chunks of torn skin barely covering dark red muscles and exposed ribs while a horde of wiggling maggots feasted on its innards.

After they had disposed of the dog, they got attacked by more leeches and zombies but luckily they could escape through an underground tunnel which had suddenly opened up right before them in the undergrowth. At its end they climbed an old rusty iron ladder which finally brought them to the front door of a large building. Maybe they would be safe in there …

Rebecca and Billy slipped through the double doors and found themselves inside a hall of such immense proportions that under different circumstances they could have had quite a decent round of tennis in it. Back to back and with their weapons drawn they worked their way through their new surroundings.

“Look at that!” Billy pointed at one of the walls where a portrait of an elderly man took up quite some space. The man himself wore an expression of nervous eccentricity.

“That's the first director of this joint, Dr. James Marcus.”

“You know him?”

“Only his name. He must be dead like 10 years now.”

“I sure hope the guy's really dead. I have had quite enough of people who are technically dead but insist on lurching around … Director you say? What is this place anyway?”

“Some kind of training facility, I think.”

As if to underline Rebecca's assumption, a recorded message of a man's voice started playing suddenly.

“Attention, this is Dr. Marcus. Please be silent as we reflect on our company's motto: Obedience breeds discipline, discipline breeds unity, unity breeds power. And Power is Life.”

“Fucked-up motto,” Billy whispered.

Rebecca's radio started making noises but it was not only statics, there was a message there.

“… chard … this is Richard … Rebecca, where are you? Rebecca …”

Rebecca's hand flew to her radio.

“This is Rebecca. I'm in a building belonging to the Umbrella Corporation. Maybe their training facility.”

“We're en-route to the mansion. Like we planned in the first place.”

“I'll be on my way there as soon as the sun's up. I won't go back into the woods by night, it's too …”

“Understood. The woods are crawling with those monsters. We see you after dawn then.”

“Roger that.” She replaced her radio on her belt.

“Hey, why didn't you mention me?” Billy asked.

“I didn't, eh? … Maybe I forgot.”

“That doesn't sound like you're very qualified for police work, does it?”

“And what qualifies you for judging me? Maybe the fact that you haven't been very qualified for Marines work either?”

That earned her a sharp look from Billy. Obviously he didn't take kindly to statements like that.

“I'm sorry, I …” Rebecca hesitated and after a short pause she continued. “Okay, why don't we stop beating around the bush? Is that story true? Did you really kill those 23 civilians?”

Billy answered without lowering his gun. “It's true, I got the orders to wipe out the whole village. And it's true that nobody in that village survived.”

He looked at Rebecca.

“Maybe I'm really not qualified for the army.”

“But I think that …” She didn't finish her sentence.

“What do you think?”

“I don't know. Let's try and get out of this mess first. So please don't bolt on me, alright?”

“Why don't you just say you need a bodyguard?”

“If anyone needs backup here it's obviously you. So stop being so damn ungrateful.”

They locked eyes. After a moment of silence, Rebecca continued:

“Okay, why don't we just go on helping each other like we did so far.”

They left the entrance hall over a flight of stairs which brought them on to the second floor. The whole building was dark and gave the impression that it was kept together solely by its thick layers of yellowing varnish. There was not a single living soul to be seen.

Something came dripping from the ceiling. Twisting and wiggling, the thing hit the floor, then reared up immediately and leaped forward.

Billy opened fire.

Black chunks of flesh got blown all over the place — a giant leech!

Rebecca looked up at the ceiling and couldn't stop herself from screaming: above their heads there was a glistening mass of creatures and for a moment the leeches dropped separately like big fat rain drops, but a second later they became a hail storm, covering the floor in slimy black bodies. There were just too many of them. Far too many to take them on with simple handguns.

Billy and Rebecca desperately tried to crush as many of them under their feet as possible, and those who lunged at them they disposed of with their combat knives. But no matter how many leeches they killed, there was no end to them. But then, suddenly …

What the hell is that? Rebecca thought.

It looked as though the glistening black creatures were trying to huddle together, forming a heap, no, a figure. A human shape.

Accompanied by sickening slurping sounds, the leeches slithered on top of each other, climbing higher and higher until they had taken on the form of a human being. And this creature, this awkward thing which looked like a man made of clay, started moving, twisting and staggering towards Billy and Rebecca.

Rebecca felt vaguely reminded of certain primitive lifeforms like cnidarian, who clustered together in so-called colonies. A large number of individual animals would form a firm collective that could act as an independent being. Some coral and jellyfish species were known for this behaviour, maybe these leeches in human shape were a kind of colony. But whatever they were, to Rebecca they were too much to cope with. She went rigid with shock.

“Rebecca!”

Billy's voice shook her out of her stupor a moment later and the young Bravo member started firing her gun again. Leeches splashed around like drops of blood. The lanky limbs of the creature twisted awkwardly this way and that and it was not exactly clear if those movements spoke of agony or excitement. After a few hits, the creature was no longer able to sustain its human-like form and collapsed into a heap on the floor.

“RUN!” Billy yelled.

While constantly firing their guns the two of them sprinted on. They crossed the room without looking left or right, they just kept going. Thousands of leeches began to form even more of those human shaped collectives, and that was definitely not a sight either of them wanted to stay around for. They bolted from the room and ran down a corridor as fast as their feet would carry them.

After a short while, they reached a kind of stone balcony and stepped outside. Dawn was still a long way off and a stinging cold rain was beating down around them. There was a steep drop beyond the rear walls of the mansion. A yawning black chasm as far as the eye could see, a picture of sheer hopelessness and desolation. The balcony connected to some kind of walkway which looked like it could take them into the adjoining wing of the house. The stone banister on their right was so weather-worn it would crumble at the slightest touch. Billy seemed unfazed by that and walked calmly along the banister, followed by Rebecca, who kept her back pressed against the wall, taking sideways steps to move forward.

A growl reached her ears. And just a second later something heavy hit her; the young Bravo didn't even get a chance to dodge. Rebecca's small frame was thrown aside and flung over the crumbling banister. This was not the first time today that she had to look death straight in the face, but suddenly Billy was there, grabbing her wrist just in time. She could only admire his reflexes.

“Don't let go!” he yelled and tried to pull her up again.

But the thing that had attacked Rebecca now turned on the ex-marine. It dug its claws deep into the flesh of Billy's back and opened its enormous jaws to try and get a bite out of his throat. At first glance, the creature looked like a baboon. It definitely was some kind of big ape but its face was distorted and ugly in an almost grotesque way. Rubbery, gnarled muscles could be seen where the skin was torn or had burst, and from the open wounds a sticky liquid seeped onto the wild patches of fur.

Billy briefly wondered if this baboon might be somehow related to all the other weird creatures they had encountered on the train and in the woods. Monsters seemed to be quite common in this area …

Just when the creature was about to rip Billy's throat open, he pressed the muzzle of his gun against its head, and calmly pulled the trigger. To avoid getting hit by ricochets he tried to lean out of the way as much as possible but there was really no reason for that: the bullet went straight through the ape's skull, eliciting a shrill, almost human-like cry from the creature. At the same time it was thrown off Billy by the force of the bullet's impact and landed on the stone walkway like a sack of bloodied fur.

All the while, even while fighting off the crazed baboon, Billy hadn't lost his grip on Rebecca's wrist, and now he finally pulled her up.

“Thanks,” she said, looking rather pale.

Billy's reply came -as always — cool and calm: “Save it.”

At first, Rebecca felt offended at his tone but after glancing around she realized that they definitely didn't have time for acknowledgments. One by one, more of the ghoulish apes appeared, announcing their presence with high-pitched screams. And they attacked without hesitating. It seemed those creatures had been fabricated as part of Dr. Marcus' private zoo, somewhere in his laboratories. Quite possibly Dr. Marcus had even determined their behaviour when faced with human enemies: it was a rather primitive pattern, almost identical with each creature. Crouch, leap, attack. Even their speed and the moment they leaped into the air could be more or less anticipated. Billy rather quickly figured out their timing and so he dispatched them almost with ease.

Rebecca also stood her ground. She wasn't nearly as effective as Billy but still good enough to back him up. It didn't take long before she started babbling how disposing of the creatures was almost like having fun at a shooting gallery. Once you knew how it worked of course. They soon left the stone balcony and entered the building again. They reached a big auditorium, which in turn brought them to a rather impressive observatory. And even here the monsters were ever-present. Mad baboons, leeches, walking corpses. At this point Billy and Rebecca started to get used to encountering

those grotesque creatures but it seemed that there was simply no end to them. When a giant bat (that could have been easily mistaken for some kind of winged dragon) appeared right above their heads, even Billy showed signs of exhaustion.

“Will this ever stop?” he groaned, irritated.

They were in a chapel now. Shooting walking corpses in a solemn environment as this would get anybody down.

“Look at this!” Rebecca pointed to something on the marble floor. She pushed one of the wooden benches to the side a bit to reveal a set of stairs, leading down into the darkness.

“Hey, good job.” said Billy, which made a proud smile creep across Rebecca's features. “Right, what are we waiting for?” He took the lead and followed the stairs down, deep below the earth, until they reached a large, cavernous room.

“Is this … a train station?” Rebecca asked.

It was indeed a station, an underground cable car station. There was a car right in front of them, hanging from its thick cable. Apparently someone had built the chapel right above a cable car system that stretched between the steep face of this mountain side to some old rusty factory, which crude buildings could be seen a few hundred meters away in the semi-darkness.

“You think it still works?” Billy wondered.

“Let's just give it a try,” Rebecca replied.

They stood before the glassed front of a control room. Billy went in and turned the main breaker. A motor started somewhere and a winch began pulling the steel cable above them tight. The car lurched forward. Quickly, Billy switched off the power again.

“Looks fine to me. Okay, let's go!” Rebecca said and stepped into the car without a moment's hesitation.

“Well, if we really have to …” Billy mumbled.

The ex-marine returned power to the engine and hurried after Rebecca.

Wesker 4

“They have done well to get this far.” Said Birkin with a tone of sincere admiration.

“What did you expect? S.T.A.R.S. is an elite unit of the police.”

“Yes, but even the guy with the tattoos. I wonder who that is?”

“I overheard the police radio. That's Billy Coen, a former marine. He was convicted by a military tribunal and sentenced to death. The guy has killed 23 civilians.” Wesker said cheerfully.

“These two would make wonderful data just ready to be gathered. Fortune seems to be favouring us this time.”

“You really are an incorrigible optimist. Birkin. What do you intend to do?”

Birkin looked at the monitor. No, he started at himself positively. But his focus was not directed at the monitor itself, but the thoughts inside his brain. Finally, he nodded vigorously and said: “The T-Virus is actually completed. Thus, we can transform this whole fucking waste into highly useful compost. However… I aim for something still higher. It would still be possible for me to create an even more powerful virus. Theoretically, it is even completed already. All that remains is for it to be trial tested.”

“And what does that mean?”

“Further research.”

“Here?”

“Exactly,” said Birkin.

“Why would you want to perform a test at an already contaminated place such as this? Do you want to use those two as test subjects?”

“Even I would not care! If I could eliminate this whole shit storm in one go…”

“The plan for the reclamation of the training centre is doomed to failure”;, objected Wesker.

“Why is that?” Birkin asked in astonishment.

“Somebody has to take responsibility for the release of the virus.”

“But that's Marcus' fault, not mine.”

“Umbrella will not last much longer.”

“…What…what are you talking about?”

Birkin sounded as though the end of the world had just been announced. He had worked for a long time under the care of Spencer. For Birkin, Umbrella was the world in which he lived. Outside, it was just a poor, shitty world. And he would not dream of putting one step into this world.

“You do not mean to leave?” Birkin asked anxiously. Instead of an answer, Wesker got up from his chair. Birkin protested: “Hey, wait a minute! What is this…”

Wesker turned away from the screens and began to walk with quick steps.

“Hey! You cannot be serious! What will become of all my research? My research!”

Wesker paused and answered, without turning around. “Don't worry. The research will continue. The T-Virus is almost finished. The data that I was able to gather here, that is the ultimate souvenir. All that remains is to collect combat data. And for that reason, the task force S.T.A.R.S. was formed. I will bring them into the mansion. You can stay here and research to your heart's content. Here, for you!” Wesker threw something at Birkin and left the room. Birkin looked at the object Wesker had just tossed him. It was a key with the logo of Umbrella Corporation.

“Damn. What a bastard! A complete fucking asshole!”

Birkin pounded repeatedly on the table with his fist. Was this really the end? He was so worked up that he could feel no pain. On the table there were already bloodstains. He gritted his teeth so tightly that they crunched. He looked for a moment like a madman, staring at his fist, from which the blood poured, and then Birkin began speaking to himself in a hoarse voice. He spoke to himself, and it sounded like the monologues of a man who had lost his obvious mental balance. “You know it…but from all over here…and you know it yourself…are not stupid…you know it only too well…the thing is gone…so…that is needed…destroy everything before it becomes even worse there.”

Birkin flipped the cover over the switch for activating the self-destruct device on the control panel. Among them were two keyholes. Birkin put the key which he had received from Wesker into one and turned it. Then he undid his key from his necklace and put it into the adjacent hole. Birkin turned the second key and watched as a valve opened up in the middle of the control panel, under which was a red button.

“This is probably the end,” muttered Birkin quietly. His excitement seemed at once like it was gone.

The Ecliptic Express Incident 6

Rebecca wasn't exactly sure if what she smelled in the half decayed factory building was blood or rust. She was running with Billy along a dark and narrow corridor flanked by various rust-covered machines which purpose was lost to her.

“ The hell is this?” Billy asked, pointing at a row of cylinder shaped water tanks made of glass — probably armoured glass. They were huge. And in each one of them something floated …

“This one looks like one of those monster apes,” Rebecca said and bent down to read the 'product name' from a little plastic label. “Says they're called Eliminators.”

Monstrous creatures of every form and shape were collected here. Black hounds with vicious jaws. Strange beings that looked like a mixture of a human and a reptile, covered in thick scales.

“The freak show's come to town.”

“Does this mean Umbrella is mass-producing these things?” Billy asked.

“Yes. Commissioned by Marcus.”

“I think I'm beginning to understand what's going on here.”

“And what's that?”

“These … things. They're weapons.”

“How?”

“If you send men to war, they still have their will, you know? Their free will weighs more than the orders of a superior officer. It takes a lot of effort and time to bring a human under your control. But these creatures? They don't have a will of their own. Control them and what you have is the perfect soldier. They're not even afraid to die. Hm, I don't know. I wouldn't like to command an army of these, even if I was an officer.”

“Weapons. So they conducted their experiments here and then tried to mass-produce all the creatures that they assumed would be a success?”

“I think they didn't just try. Look around. This is a production line.” said Billy.

“I heard somewhere that Umbrella was up to a lot of strange stuff. There were rumours that they developed and sold bio-genetic weapons. Those things seem to be just that.” Rebecca had been walking on while saying this, and now found herself in front of some kind of control panel. “What's this?”

Before Billy could say or do anything, Rebecca had already pressed one of the plastic buttons on the panel. A jolt went through the room and then suddenly the floor below

their feet started to slowly sink into the ground. Apparently the whole construction was some kind of service lift, taking the two of them deeper and deeper into the ground.

“If this thing keeps going like that, we're gonna end up in Hell,” Billy mused, a faint smile on his face. But actually they both didn't feel much like smiling considering that the lift took them to some unknown destination. There was a point where even the naivest optimist began to get worried. And then, the lift stopped. Suddenly it was very quiet around them. So quiet that both Billy and Rebecca could hear the faint rushing of their blood in their ears. Even here, half a mile underneath the surface, there were endless rows of rusted machinery with unclear purpose. Something went 'splat' in the semi-darkness.

“Not again …” Billy muttered but it was already too late.

Giant leeches came crawling from everywhere. Like a slimy river, they covered every surface, floor, walls, and ceiling. Rebecca and Billy had drawn their weapons, waiting for the attack, but nothing happened. Not one of the creatures showed the least bit of interest in the two humans invading their territory. Instead, they flowed together and up the steps of a broad staircase that lead to a higher floor. And there, on the gallery, stood an old man.

“Who are you?!” Rebecca yelled. The face of the man reminded her of the portrait she had seen back in the entrance hall of the training facility.

“My name is Marcus. Dr. James Marcus,” the man answered. His voice was dry and, like his face, bereft of any emotions as he was looking down on them.

“Director Marcus? Impossible! He's dead.”

The man just gave a jerky shrug. “No, he's not dead. He was never dead. Listen to me and listen well.” The way he uttered those words sounded like he was talking to them with his mouth full.

“Attention! This is Director Dr. James Marcus. Please be silent as we reflect upon our company's motto: Obedience breeds discipline. Discipline breeds unity. Unity breeds

power. And power is life.” The voice was eerily monotonous but grew in volume with every word.

“It has been ten years since Spencer's assassins had shot me. Oh the pain, the terrible pain. Never seizing, it was like going through Hell.”

“What … what is he talking about?” Rebecca whispered.

“You think it's really that Dr. Marcus?” Billy was at a loss here. He didn't even dare point his gun at the old man.

“And then those bastards stole my work. Everything I have achieved. But alas, my God has been very generous towards me that fateful day. Attention! This is Director Dr. James Marcus. Please be silent as we reflect upon our company's motto: Obedience breeds discipline. Discipline breeds unity. Unity breeds power. And power is life!!!”. The man was yelling now, faint tremors running across his features.

“Secretly I managed to merge my cell tissue with that of my leeches and then I enhanced it with the T-virus. Thus, a miracle happened! Thus, I leech among leeches and, at the same time, ALL leeches! The leeches are with me and they have grown with me!” The tremors became more pronounced. With every twitch, wrinkles rolled like waves across his face and something seemed to thrash about inside his mouth, trying violently to find a way out.

“I'm very fond of leeches. In a certain way, I even love them. I am leech as well as man. I am an emissary. Arbitrating between man and leech.” His face contorted as if he were in extreme pain. But it wasn't even a real face anymore.

“Leeches. Leeches, leeches. Slippery, slippery leeches. But they are me. Slippery. I am begging you, please. Slippery. Slippeaaaaargh!” He howled like a wounded animal. His features began to droop, his skin hanging limply from his cheekbones. And then it just dropped off, flowed down his body right onto the assembled leeches at his feet. The creature, that had no longer any resemblance to the deceased Dr. Marcus, started to absorb the mass of writhing bodies, curiously mimicking the clothes of the old man for a short while. And then it leaped. With a splashing sound, the leech-man hit the floor in

front of Rebecca and Billy. It was unnatural, the way it moved, trying to get up. Its long arms looked like thick braided strands of rubber. Suddenly one of those arms whipped around and shot straight at Rebecca, who dodged it at the last possible moment. Sharp claws dug into the floor, spraying sparks.

Billy opened fire, his bullets ripping into black and bloodied flesh, making the creature back off a few steps. But not an inch further. Again it attacked, this time with both whip-like arms. The claws rushed passed Billy's face, missing his nose by a hair.

“Give it a wide berth, Rebecca. Stay away from it!” Billy yelled and retreated.

Meanwhile, the young Bravo had produced a small round object from her pocket.

“Get further away from it,” she screamed in his direction, turned her back to the approaching monster and started to run. After a short distance she risked a look over her shoulder. “Hm, that should do it.” She stopped abruptly and then threw the round object into the creature's path.

“Get down!!” Rebecca yelled and hit the ground. A bright light filled the room, then the explosion shook the whole building. The blast wave swept rusty splinters and other debris across the floor.

“What the hell was that?!”

“A hand grenade. The world's smallest hand grenade. Made in Holland.”

When the billows of smoke thinned out a bit of something on the basement floor became visible. A mass of wriggling, slimy things.

“No, this can't be …”

The hand grenade did not really have much of an effect. The writhing mass just changed its form, adding more and more of the leeches that were streaming towards it from all directions, wave after wave, to be absorbed by the creature. It grew bigger and bigger, doubling its size, tripling it … it didn't take long for it to reach the size of a small building.

The creature started trembling, its skin ripping and tearing away, revealing innumerable rows of what looked like thick spikes or thorns.

Then its head split open into four segments, leaving a bizarre hole. The flaps of skin turned into spiked tentacles that swayed about like seaweed underwater. And then the creature started moving towards Rebecca and Billy, quickly picking up speed.

“What in god's name is that?!” Rebecca yelled and immediately opened fire.

“Let's get out of here. Now!”

Billy followed her example, shooting at the advancing monster before taking his advice and turning to run. In one corner of the room there was a control panel for the lift. Neither Billy nor Rebecca hesitated; they both made for the lift, reaching it almost at the same time.

Billy pressed the start button. A jolt went through the whole structure and for a moment, it felt like the lift would descend but a second later it started to move up. It had a long way to go but it quickly began to pick up speed. With a hopeful expression on her face, Rebecca stared upwards.

Then -as if to shatter all her hopes- a monotonous computer voice announced:

“The self-destruct sequence has been activated. All personnel must evacuate immediately. The self-destruct sequence has been activated. All personnel must evacuate immediately. This is not a drill.”

“Self-destruct sequence?” Rebecca asked. “Are these people completely crazy?”

“Someone wants to get rid of all those monsters …” Billy stopped abruptly, and Rebecca knew why.

“I can hear it, too.” she said. There was a scratching sound, like a claw scraping along a wall.

“It's behind us!” They yelled simultaneously.

“Shit! If that thing catches up with us, we're done for!”

“Faster. We have to go faster!”

Rebecca started pummelling the control panel in front of her.

“Stop that!” Billy growled and grabbed her hand.

“Hey, don't touch me!”

“If you hit the wrong button, we'll be in serious trouble.”

“Let me worry about that.”

Rebecca shook off his hand and reached into her pocket.

“What now?”

“Another hand grenade?”

“Don't be stupid. You'll destroy the lift!”

“But I have to do something!”

“How about shutting up for a change?!”

“Wouldn't dream of it.”

“Shut up!”

“How dare you …?”

“There!”

“What do you mean, there?”

“Oh, for heaven's sake, we're there!”

The two of them had been so engrossed in their little fight they hadn't noticed that the lift had already stopped at its final destination at the top level of the facility. They quickly got out and took a look around. What now?

Up above, there was a hole in the ceiling. It looked like the whole roof had been constructed to slide open, maybe to give helicopters access to this area when transporting heavy machinery. Sunlight filtered into the room. Morning had finally come and the rain had stopped. There was even a patch of blue sky over them.

But Billy and Rebecca didn't have time to enjoy the view. They crossed the large room, searching for a way out.

But their search was cut short when suddenly a new monster greeted them — a monster that tossed steel plates around like they were plywood. Its body was littered with spiky tentacles and each tentacle seemed to have a life of its own testing its surroundings to sniff out its next target. The creature opened its gigantic jaws to present two rows of massive, crooked fangs.

“Fire!” Billy and Rebecca screamed simultaneously and started shooting. Clearly affected by the hail of bullets the creature backed off a bit but every time one of them had to reload it moved its enormous bulk in their direction again.

Rebecca and Billy decided to split up so they could attack their enemy from both sides. Whenever the monster went for one of them the other was there to distract it. This plan proved to be astonishingly successful: none of them even got scratched by those large tentacles. But it soon became obvious that ordinary ammunition would never suffice to take the creature down. It was only a matter of time really before one of them would run out of ammo or just collapse from sheer exhaustion. Especially Rebecca could not go on like this forever. One false move and the monster would just crush her beneath its massive body.

“Oh god, how long can this thing keep going?!” Rebecca yelled.

“It's over when it's over!” Billy replied.

“Yeah, over for us.”

“Hey, I got it! Look up there!” Billy pointed to the hole in the roof. “Looks like our friend is afraid of sunlight.”

Now Rebecca could see it, too. No matter if it was attacking or retreating, the monster always made sure to stay out of the little patch of sunlight.

“Let's give it a try! Drive it into the light!”

And so they did. They regrouped and resumed firing at the creature, aiming carefully to drive it slowly but surely into the centre of the room, right underneath the hole in the ceiling. And indeed: the monster tried to avoid the light.

“We have to get that sliding roof open! There must be some kind of lever or button to activate it.” Billy looked around and then pointed at a large red button. “Could be that one. I'll keep our ugly friend occupied and you go ahead and push the button, okay?”

“Roger!” Rebecca already started running towards the button.

“Hey, tall dark and ugly! Over here!” Billy fired a few bullets to get the creature's attention. Its eyeless visage moved in his direction, its gaping maw oozing white slime. A second later Rebecca has reached the button and pushed it down hard with both hands. Somewhere, a motor started. Something rattled. It seemed to have been the right button! With a metallic squeak loud enough to drown out the gun shots, the roof panels began to move. Inch by inch, sunlight streamed into the room while the creature hastily tried to get out of the way. But already half of the room was brightly lit by now and finally the first rays of sun hit the monster. Something hissed and steam rose as the creature's skin dried and crackled like old rubber.

But it was not over yet. The thing that had once been Dr. Marcus squirmed and struggled in its final death throes. Unfortunately Rebecca was in its way. It all happened very quickly. The creature reared up and just threw the young Bravo off her feet. She felt like she got hit by a car as she was flung up in the air. A second later she hit a wall, losing the grip on her gun. She finally landed on her stomach, not able to move or breath. And still, the monster was not finished with her.

But Billy was also on the move. He dashed forward and grabbed Rebecca's gun. Without hesitating, he started firing both guns and bullet after bullet ripped into the

creature's flesh before it could get to Rebecca. And then it finally collapsed, its skin looking like cracked clay.

“Rebecca! We did it!” Billy yelled.

But his euphoria was only short-lived. There was definitely something going on with the dead creature; strange noises came from its huge form.

“Watch out!” Rebecca screamed and they both started running. A moment later the shock-wave of an explosion pushed them to the ground.

When they got back on their feet again they saw that there was nothing much left of the creature. All that remained was an ugly mass of vaguely organic looking tissue spread across the large room.

They had finished the monster but they weren't out of the woods yet.

“The self-destruct sequence has been activated. All personnel must evacuate immediately. This is not a drill,” the computer voice droned on.

“Let's get out of here,” Billy said and started running again. Rebecca nodded and followed him. Victory was close…

Wesker 5

The train was derailed and overturned. It was the train that had brought Rebecca and her companion here, the Ecliptic Express. The front car of the train was derailed and destroyed, smoke still rose from the ruins. Two men stood among the smoke, their expressions unreadable. They were tall men with muscular chests. Both wore long coats that hid their bodies, but even so it was obvious that they were both well-trained physically. The first man held a knife with three blades arranged asymmetrically, like something used in ancient Indian antiquities. Wesker, who had arrived from the research

centre through the underground passage, threw the two just a quick glance and was about to walk past them.

“Going somewhere, Comrade Wesker?”

Wesker paused and answered, without looking at his questioner. “I'm on my way to my next mission, Colonel Sergei Vladimir.”

The man, Sergei, made a greasy looking grin. If it was a grin, then you had to assume that the more human side of his personality was obviously broken.

“The plan for the reactivation of the training centre was your idea. You were charged with the implementation. And now we have this fiasco. One might think you owe an explanation, Wesker.” Sergei smiled, as if he had just made a successful joke.

In contrast, the countenance of the man behind him remained remarkably impassive. His face was stiff and cold as ice. So rigid was it in fact that one could effortlessly have regarded it as a very intricately designed mask. Granted, Sergei's eerie grin had something mask-like. In any case, there was no doubt that these two guys had very little humanity within them. But Wesker at this point did nothing to point this fact out. The Commander of S.T.A.R.S. ignored Sergei's request and wanted to go.

“You want to go without simply answering for it, do you?”

“The T-Virus has broken out. The training centre is lost. It will be blown up in a few moments.”

“Blown up? You don't say, comrade. I think I need to clarify something here. We have jointly committed to Lord Spencer. We are comrades. Unilateral action by individuals cannot be tolerated,” said Sergei. He played with the clean knife in his hand and pointed the gleaming blade directly at Wesker. Sergei's face wore a devilish grin.

But Wesker was not intimidated. He met Sergei's eyes for a moment in silence, and then said; “You probably belong to the bracket of men who gladly allow themselves to be dominated.”

Sergei looked at Wesker in amazement.

“Restricted guys like you are always asked by someone who dominates and controls.,” continued Wesker. “And you know why? Because you cannot make one single decision on your own. You think that you serve Lord Spencer but you are mistaken. You simply are controlled by someone who dominates you. You are a robot. Your stupid mass is afraid of nothing more than change. As long as nothing changes for you, you do not care if anyone else is ruling and dominating you. Yes, they often do not get it again.”

“What do you mean?”

“The fact that one day you will eventually work for me, Sergei.”

Upon hearing this, Sergei laughed ostentatiously. “You really are as stupid as they say, Wesker! But I love conceited, arrogant guys like you! You know, every person fits physical pain. And people like you have physical pain. And people like you are no exception. I am looking forward to it! I cannot wait to see you crawling on the ground and see you whimper for mercy with tears of blood after it had pierced your eyes, tore your fingernails right out, and pulled out each tooth individually!”

Sergei stuck his tongue out, grinning widely now. He pressed the blade of his knife into his mouth and pulled back sharply, still grinning. On his tongue, a straight line appeared, made from the pouring deep red blood.

“Pain is the messenger of the gods. It is the bond that unites us human beings with the gods. And I think you have earned something like this. I speak from pain, which is a gift from the gods. Ivan! Show him what it means to feel pain!”

The man, who had been standing behind Sergei the whole time, moved forward with smooth movements. He was a big build, and his body moved like a spring. Before Wesker he came to a halt. At the same moment, Wesker shot him without the slightest hesitation. It did not seem to bother him to shoot another man. On the other hand, — his opponent was not really just a 'man.' Although Ivan was hit by a volley from Wesker's Kalashnikov, it seemed to make little difference to him. A little blood and flesh splattered, and Ivan took a few steps forward, having suffered little significant visible damage. However, this did not seem to surprise Wesker one bit.

“Just as I suspected,” he murmured under his breath.

The Ecliptic Express Incident 7

The sun was up and dominated the blue sky to the east. It was morning. The clearing on the small hill was bathed in sunlight and seemed to be the perfect place for a little rest. The lush green forest surrounding it bristled with life and it was quite unimaginable that it was so close to the place where they had gone through a virtual nightmare …

Rebecca could feel the thunder of the massive detonations getting closer and closer to her, she could see the gigantic ball of fire and the flames consuming the entire training facility. And then, with something like a satisfied burp, a cloud of black smoke left the wreckage.

It looked like the self-destruct system had been designed to leave nothing to chance, again and again small detonations shook the ground beneath their feet. The heat emanating from the destruction sight even reached the small hill and warmed their faces.

The nightmare was finally over. Rebecca took in the view, the destroyed buildings reminded her a bit of a movie set.

“Looks just like they were shooting a movie down there,” she said.

“But it wasn't a movie.” Billy stood next to Rebecca, scanning the remains of the training facility where they had been fighting for their lives only minutes ago. “There are no credits rolling when your life is over. And my life goes on after the curtain drops …”

Billy held out his hands towards Rebecca, the handcuffs were still in place. Just the chain linking them had been severed.

Rebecca ignored that. She took a step towards him, reached up and undid the prisoner tag that he had been wearing around his neck.

“What are you doing?”

“I will state in my report that the prisoner Billy Coen has died last night.”

“Rebecca …”

“From now on, you can consider yourself a zombie,” she laughed.

Billy gave her a smile. “Well, I'm feeling pretty good for a dead person today.”

“Although you smell a bit burnt. What are you going to do now?”

“I have no idea. What about you?”

“I've got to get back to the Arklay Mountains. My team is waiting for me.”

“So, this means goodbye, then.”

They turned to look at each other, holding the other's gaze for a moment. Then they saluted.

And then, without another word, Rebecca marched off into the woods to head for the mansion. Of course, she was not aware that what was awaiting her there was even more terrifying and grotesque than anything she had been up against the night before.

The Mansion Incident 1

(July 24, 1998)

The nightmare continued. Rebecca was on her way to the mansion, the rendezvous point Richard had radioed her last night. The path led her through the forest and became a hellish journey. Although it was broad daylight and the forest was green and alive, the monsters roaming through it had not come to rest. And Rebecca was all alone now. Alone like a little child, wriggling and struggling to escape a nightmare.

This difficult mission, which has been going on for two days now, was pushing Rebecca to the brink of exhaustion. All her explosives and grenades were used up. Chased by

half rotten dogs, she finally arrived at the supposedly secure mansion and slammed the entrance doors shut behind her. Her willpower was at its end. No matter what was inside this building – she was done with the world and everything in it. She was leaning against the door, slid to the ground and passed out immediately. Rebecca was dreaming. A dream of terrifying monsters surrounding her. Even in sleep she was scared.

“Rebecca!”

Rebecca heard someone calling her name and opened her eyes. She was lying on a bed and had no idea of how long she had slept. Next to the bed, with a worried expression on his face, was…

“Richard?!”

Richard’s facial expression relaxed, the young man smiled friendly. “Thank god nothing happened to you! Where have you been all this time?”

“I was on that train and it brought me to Umbrella’s training facility. There I had to fight against those terrible creatures. Those creatures, in fact, they are…”

Rebecca stopped talking.

“What is it?”

“Tell me, Richard… has anyone else from the Bravo Team entered the Ecliptic Express?”

“Yes, Edward did. That train seems to attract you Rear Security guys.”

“Edward is dead.” Rebecca remembered the zombified Edward Dewey attacking her and Billy.

“I see… I’m afraid the situation hasn’t been any better for the rest of us. Those monsters have attacked us relentlessly and we were separated. Everyone had to fight on their own. We tried to hide but I don’t know if… Anyway, you’re the only I’ve seen. Everyone else has disappeared.”

Richard helped Rebecca to get up. “Grenades and ammo are hidden everywhere in this mansion, so keep your eyes open.”

“Why…”

“I’m sure it is some sort of trap. However, it is also safe to say that the grenades and ammo are still in good condition and can be very useful to us. So take whatever you find.”

“Roger.”

“We could look for Captain Enrico. I’m sure he’s still alive. He must have made it… Dammit, Rebecca, I’m sure you imagined your first mission to be different. Let’s look for a secure hideout first.”

However, that was easier said than done. There seemed to be no secure place in that mansion. The mansion was crowded with zombies. And there were more – gigantic spiders, rotting dogs and other creatures from hell attacked them relentlessly.

They came across an inner courtyard and then entered the mansion again.

“Is everything okay? You look pretty exhausted”, Richard said. He also had a tired look on his face.

“Yes, it’s alright. You know, you’ll get used to everything after some time — even to walking corpses.”

Richard smiled. Although Rebecca was only a rookie with no experience, her exceptional, cheery manner was something he cherished to have at his side. “So, the next night will be tough. I’ve been having this weird feeling for all this time now.”

“Wait a minute, Mister colleague! This attitude will take us nowhere. Bad things only happen because we always tell ourselves that they will happen! So don’t worry, we’ll make it! And never forget that we are part of an elite team! We are the S.T.A.R.S.!”

“You’re right. We’ve made it through a very hard training, so something like this won’t intimidate us. If we act calm and collected, then we will make it out of here alive.”

“That’s right, the…” Rebecca stopped mid-sentence. She was looking at a big window behind Richard. The sun was already setting fast and the forest, framed by the red light of the evening sky, turned thicker by the minute. On a path leading into the dark green of the forest, two men were walking by. They were carrying something, a bag, barely big enough for a person to fit in. Almost nothing could surprise Rebecca anymore.

“What are they doing? Who are those men? They didn’t look like zombies.” Rebecca couldn’t make out how big the men were, however, they seemed to be fairly big and strong.

Rebecca couldn’t know that Sergei and Ivan transported the prototype of the creature, which would become the most powerful biological weapon of all time and had been created in the labs underneath the mansion. The mansion belonged to Umbrella, just like the training facility. Rebecca and Richard would only find this out much later, of course.

“Oh great, those guys are voluntarily heading right into the monster-infested forest”, said Richard surprised. “Whatever… Anyway, we must not forget to report this to the Captain later.”

“Right.”

“Okay, then let’s go!”

Rebecca and Richard exited the room and zombies started to attack them immediately from all sides. The fight against the seemingly endless hordes of monsters had started once again. The hallway led them to a veranda. There they were attacked by huge wasps, bats and other kinds of monsters.

Richard and Rebecca fought their way through towards another room. After finally entering the room and closing the doors behind them, they were suddenly surrounded by silence. They both released a breath of relief. However, right after that, shattered glass and black things flew into the room. They were crows, but not normal ones. They were monstrous creatures, infected with the virus. Unimpressed by the bullets coming

at them, the crows attacked Rebecca and Richard. They only had one aim: to scratch out Rebecca and Richard's eyes.

Richard fired his AK-47 which he had found along the way, but not even sustained fire could stop the crows. The birds pushed both of them back, despite all their fighting. The smallest mistake could be their last one. Exhaustion made it more and more difficult for Rebecca to concentrate. She knew there were stairs behind her but she thought it would've been a few more steps until she reached the last step. Fumbling around she moved backwards, keeping the crows in her sight. Suddenly, she missed a step and fell down the stairs.

The crows used the opportunity to attack even stronger. Richard didn't back down and continued to fight with his assault rifle and his knife. He managed to defeat the last crow and the room was silent again. Richard immediately ran towards Rebecca who was lying at the bottom of the staircase, motionless.

"Are you okay, Rebecca?"

"Yes, I'm okay." She got up, a painful expression on her face and holding her hips. "Guess I was too motivated."

Richard let out a scoffing laugh.

"You don't need to apologize. I don't know anyone who can keep a clear head under such circumstances." Richard wanted to pocket his knife when he noticed that he couldn't let go of it. He took a deep breath and then, mustering a lot of willpower, he loosened his grip on the handle. One finger at a time. The constant tension had taken its toll on him as well, far more than what he had ever imagined.

Tired, he said, "We might be the sole survivors of our team." He released the emptied magazine from the assault rifle and let it fall to the ground.

"Shit, that was my last magazine. I guess we're next."

"They will get us out of here soon, I'm sure of it", said Rebecca, smiling. Her smile was an honest smile. Richard could feel that she believed that from the bottom of her heart.

“The Captain assured us that a rescue team would come. We must not give up on us now.” Richard silently focused on the now useless rifle.

“Look, Richard, I also came to save you, after all.”

It was strange that Rebecca could still smile, although she must’ve been as exhausted as he was.

“You mean you came to support me?”

“No, Richard. I am your bodyguard.” Rebecca laughed, making him laugh as well. It was this open, engaging smile he was usually known for. Rebecca was an expert in chemistry who knows a lot about explosives, drugs and similar things – but monsters weren’t part of that. Yet, her smile was more important right now than all of her knowledge.

However, the two would have nothing to laugh about any more soon enough. And it would’ve been a lie to say that they didn’t have any idea about that – because Rebecca and Richard could feel it coming closer. They had come across all kinds of horrible monsters along the way and managed to survive. And maybe that was what made them act a bit too reckless. Exhaustion made them lose their clear view of the situation.

When they turned around, it already towered over them. It, that was what had a head the size of a small car. The head of a snake. A snake so big that it could’ve been right out of a divine legend. It hissed threateningly and opened its mouth. The whole head now seemed to be a huge maw. Its fangs flashed sharply, just like daggers. A clear liquid dropped from the two longest fangs. Venom, probably. And not too little. If a mutated animal was now venomous on top of everything, then…

“God help us…” Richard said. Then he fell silent. Before he could finish his sentence, he had already pulled the trigger. He didn’t have the assault rifle anymore but he still had his pistol. Richard emptied it in no time and reloaded. When he hit the snake’s maw, he could see pieces of flesh and blood splatter. He needed to hit the snake’s extremely robust outer skin at a right angle; otherwise, the bullets bounced off the scales.

Rebecca also focused her shots on the snake's head. She aimed for the yellow eyes but they were also protected by the scale armour. She couldn't even hurt the snake in the slightest. With a threatening hiss and an unbelievable speed, the huge snake jumped at Richard and Rebecca. Both of them fired two, three more shots and then dodged to the side – this wasn't going to work.

"Run!" Richard screamed.

Both of them were running along a hallway. It was so tight that the snake's head barely fit into it. However, the snake couldn't be stopped and continued to chase them with its unbelievable speed. While on the run, Rebecca and Richard passed the many maze-like hallways of the mansion. There was no time for looking around. Just forward, on and on, one step after another. Until they reached a dead end. There was a big door at the end of the hallway — and it was locked, of course. They ran against the door and threw themselves at it until it budged.

Rebecca and Richard now were in a library and slammed the door behind them. The room was two stories high and had an opening in the middle area, the walls were covered with bookshelves. Judging by the amount of books, this library was as good as any other local library in the country.

Something slammed against the closed door with a tremendous force. A threatening hiss could be heard from the outside. Shortly after that, the enormous snake slammed against the door a second time and the door was tossed into the room.

"Come on, you monster!" Richard growled, facing the snake.

Rebecca noticed what Richard's intention was and jumped to the side. In the meantime, Richard focused on the snake's snout and began firing. Pieces of skin and blood splattered. The huge snake jumped at Richard. He escaped at the last moment and fired at the snake's snout when it turned around.

Those wounds were hardly fatal but the snake was bothered by it nevertheless. Richard knew that reptiles, like all other cold-blooded animals, couldn't move around quickly for a longer time because they are unable to keep their body temperature at a constant

level. Therefore, Rebecca and Richard still had a chance to win this fight. They just had to keep fighting. The snake's movement slowed down little by little indeed. It even had troubles keeping its head up after a while. It soon would lose its temper and go for an all-or-nothing attack to win this fight.

That was the moment Richard and Rebecca were waiting for while they rapidly changed their positions. Shoot and dodge, dodge and shoot. The snake continued to swoop its head down on them. The pair dodged the attacks and patiently waited for an opportunity to attack. Their patience was rewarded. The snake opened its jaw and jumped at Richard to kill him with only one bite. Rebecca was watching the whole situation carefully. The second she got a clear sight of the snake's deep mouth, she threw a grenade. Richard started firing at the same time. The snake's tongue was ripped apart, blood and flesh splattered.

That was too much, even for a huge snake like this. It was shaking, fell to the side and rolled up like a ball of wool. One of the big bookshelves fell over with a bang. The next second, a dull bang could be heard from inside the snake's body. The snake opened its mouth reflexively. Like a dragon in agony, the monster spit dark red flames and black smoke. Dust clouds and smoke were whirled up and blocked Rebecca and Richard's view.

Shortly after the dust settled, Rebecca and Richard were looking at the snake's weak body lying on the floor.

"I think that was it." Richard went over to the snake and kicked it. The monster wasn't moving.

"I hope that was it…" Rebecca sank to the floor and released a sigh of relief.

"Hey, there's no time to rest!" Richard reached his hand to her. He had no doubts about their victory, not in the slightest. However, it would have benefitted him to remember how tough some of the monsters in this mansion had been.

The snake moved its head. And then, with sheer unbelievable speed, it opened its mouth and jumped forwards like a missile. It was decision time. Richard pushed Rebecca out

of the way. The rookie had to watch the monster sinking its venomous teeth into Richard's body.

"Richard!!" Rebecca's desperate scream came too late. The teeth dug deep into his side and one of his thighs. The snake lifted Richard into the air with ease. And then – like a child playing with a doll – the monster started spinning Richard around. Rebecca immediately jumped on the snake's body and opened fire. Muzzle directly at the snake's skin, she shot bullet after bullet into it. However, the snake started shaking and threw Rebecca off. The police woman was slammed into a wall. She blacked out for a second and lost consciousness. It was like a lightning strike, and Rebecca's head was filled with white light.

When Rebecca recovered a few seconds later she got back up immediately and ran back towards the snake.

"You goddamn monster!! Let Richard go! Now!" Rebecca shot at the huge snake from a short distance. When the magazine was empty, Rebecca pulled out her knife and rammed it between the reptile's hard scales. Again and again. Rebecca was thrown against a wall again. And also Richard, still trapped in the snake's mouth, was not to get off lightly. The snake knocked some bookshelves over and smashed him two or three times against the walls and floor. But no matter what happened, Richard didn't let go of his gun. He looked for an opening between his body and the snake's fangs and pointed the gun's muzzle at it. And then he pulled the trigger.

The barrel was so hot that it burned Richard's hand. However, the S.T.A.R.S. officer continued firing. He shot bullet after bullet into the snake's mouth until it winced in pain and finally threw him away. Richard was thrown to the side, smashed into a wall, and then fell to the ground. The snake was clearly exhausted. It turned its two victims adrift and bolted.

"Richard!!"

Rebecca hurried to her colleague's side. Richard was in a bad condition. He looked like he'd been impaled. Grisly holes were in his thigh and his side, but apparently none of the large blood vessels were damaged and the loss of blood wasn't that bad. Richard

groaned and his teeth chattered loudly. The Bravo's face was pale and sweaty. Richard Aiken, the elite soldier, usually physically and mentally tough, was writhing in pain. By now his thigh was swollen so much, black-red bloated flesh could be seen through his ripped pants.

"I'm sorry! I am so, so sorry! This is all my fault…" Rebecca was crying, hitting her fist on the ground. "Why? Why?"

Richard groaned, "Don't give me… that face…" Richard forced himself to cheer Rebecca up. "You are my… bodyguard."

"Yeah, that's right", Rebecca answered, looking up. "I am your bodyguard. And I won't let you die!" Rebecca gave Richard her hand.

"Can you see that?"

Richard nodded.

"How many fingers?"

Richard shook his head. Rebecca had been afraid of that, Richard couldn't see properly anymore. His gaze was so clouded, everything was spinning.

"Okay, so one thing is definitely clear. The snake's venom is hemotoxic, like that of a rattlesnake. This type of venom destroys tissue and causes bleeding. This leads to severe pain and swelling. But, blessing in disguise, I'd say. If it had been neurotoxic venom, you'd be dead by now."

The huge snake was probably a biological weapon as well. A snake with slow working venom was used on purpose, rather than one with neurotoxic venom which would lead to an immediate death. Compared to a deadly venom, hemotoxic venom had two weakening effects on the enemy's strength: The bitten soldier was now rendered useless but no way was he near fatally wounded. Because of this, his comrades need to take care of him – a necessity which slows the whole team down even more. Dead soldiers would normally be left behind because nothing could've been done for them anymore. It was the same effect anti-personnel mines have, which are just strong enough to tear

off a person's legs but are not fatal. Or letting a sniper shoot a person's arms or legs on purpose. Every wounded soldier slows the whole team down. That was a truism of warfare.

"Shit… it hurts so much! Why does such a huge snake need venom anyway? It could've just swallowed me!"

Richard tried to sit up but Rebecca put her hand on his chest, pushing him back. "Stop. You have to lie still. If you move, the venom will spread through your body even further."

"Shit! I can't take it anymore! Shit!"

"Don't talk! And no worries, Richard, you can make it! You're invincible. And I am too, by the way. The others will come and get us out of here soon. I'm sure of it. My intuition has never betrayed me."

Richard closed his eyes and his whole body began to shake violently. Rebecca didn't lie. The hemotoxic venom didn't cause an immediate death. However, the fangs had damaged his inner organs – the situation was serious. Yes, it seemed like a miracle that he was still alive, and Rebecca knew this all too well. All of this happened because she had been careless. Because she had let herself go. Because she had relied on him too much. Rebecca held the shaking Richard tight in her arms. "Lord, please, give me strength", she prayed. "Give me the strength to save him. And give me the strength to survive with him."

Wesker 6

Wesker had long since shed his white lab coat and left the training centre at speed in order to immediately make his way to the meeting place. There he had to don his second face; that of Captain of S.T.A.R.S. Alpha Team. He had led his men into the woods where the monsters were waiting for them. The Alpha Team was instructed to

trace the Bravo Team, who had been missing in action since the previous night. At least, that was what the official order had been and it seemed perfectly reasonable, given the circumstances. Wesker was the only one that knew from the outset what his team were going to expect in this hell they were going to. In the end, only two of his team members would make it to the mansion alive; Chris Redfield and Jill Valentine.

For Wesker, so far everything had gone as expected. Although perhaps it would be more accurate to say that everything went according to plan for Wesker. How far would the developed biological weapons fare under real combat conditions — under combat conditions with well-trained operatives? This question would be answered in a large-scale experiment. And that was the real reason that Wesker had the Alpha Team lured to the mansion.

Would the biological weapons be a match against a battle-hardened and fearless elite unit such as S.T.A.R.S.? All data, which would contribute an answer to this question, would be fully recorded. A tiny module had been integrated into the helmet of each team member, which recorded everything from vital body functions and miniature digital cameras that were attached to the headsets of the soldiers. Wesker would collect all the memory cards from the modules after the mission was over. He wondered how the mutant creatures would react against his men, and what strategies they would adopt when fighting? What tactics would both sides use? These were the questions Wesker was hoping to find answers to.

Accompanied by his last two remaining team members, he entered the mansion. Three surviving members of an originally six man strong team; - these figures alone at a glance made it clear what unrelenting harshness Alpha Team would face in the coming hours.

Finally, the team had fled from a pack of half-decayed black dogs and made it into the mansion. When they were finally behind the safety of the front door, they were greeted by a pervasive atmosphere of calm. The continuous struggle of the last few minutes suddenly appeared like a distant dream. They stood in the spacious hall. But before they could plan their next move, they suddenly heard the sound of gunfire in the distance, coming from somewhere within the mansion. The three responded bluntly.

“I'll go and check it out,” Said Chris.

“I'm coming too!” replied Jill.

“Be careful, people.” Ordered Wesker. “I will stay and hold this position. We will meet again in 30 minutes, right here.”

After synchronizing their watches, the two were on their way to the door that led to the dining room. Jill and Chris had only been gone a few seconds when Wesker sprang into action. He knew this mansion like the back of his hand, no wonder, after all, Umbrella Corporation owned the mansion. Wesker ran to the wall opposite. There, behind a painting, there was a tiny slot. Wesker fished a card from his pocket and placed it into the slot. As if by magic, part of the wall opened very quietly and very slowly, revealing a passage into an adjacent room. This was the control room.

On the walls of the control room, 25 screens were lined up. The pictures flickered over them, showing in detail what was going on inside the mansion. Wesker would not have to explore every room like Chris and Jill would, he could see everything from here on out. He settled on a very functional acting chair in front of the wall of screens. Everything that happened from inside the mansion would be observed from this control room and recorded.

“Well, let's get started,” Wesker said to himself, and began to operate the switchboard. One of the monitors showed his two team members as they moved through the dining room. The duo crossed the dining room and stepped through a door at the end of the room into the adjoining room. There, a figure whose movements looked monotonous and mechanical. At first glance it looked like a man, but in reality it was not human. It was a former-man, a living-dead man. A zombie.

Wesker hit a button and zoomed in closer. The zombie was crouched there, holding someone in its arms. Not to protect him, of course, but to feast on him. The camera zoomed in closer to the face of the man being eaten alive.

“Kenneth…”, mumbled Wesker and he grinned mockingly. “What a shame. So shortly before the finish…;”

The man was Kenneth Sullivan, a member of S.T.A.R.S. Bravo Team. Wesker watched the dying man for a while, but the images soon bored him. Again, he flicked a switch and focused on another of the monitors. It looked as though he had come across some survivors from Bravo Team. Wesker could see a woman holding a man in his arms. The man was Richard Aiken and the woman was Rebecca Chambers. Wesker brought up the vital functions of the two members on another of the monitors.

“This guy will not live,” muttered Wesker and reached into a drawer, pulling out an aluminum box. He tapped in a PIN code, and the lid of the casket opened. Inside the casket was a shot kit with a bottle of fluid and a vial for pumping the fluid into a syringe. He rolled up his sleeve and plunged the needle into the vein of his arm. In the clear vial he watched the mingled red threads of his blood mix with the pus-yellow liquid in the syringe, he pushed down on the plunger. For a moment, the captain of Alpha Team pulled a twisted little face. Then he took a deep breath.

On the monitor it was obvious his men had begun firing upon the zombie that had eaten their comrade. Wesker's breathing became faster and shallower. On his forehead, tiny beads of sweat began to appear and the vein on his temple was pulsing. Wesker gritted his teeth until he could hear them crunch. A sudden pain like a thousand hot needles perforated his body. The glowing feeling dispersed in his body for a moment, then it gathered again and travelled from here to there. Wesker endured the pain without a single complaint. He possessed an almost superhuman stamina. An ordinary man in such pain would have already fainted, perhaps even died from shock.

On the monitors, it was visible that one zombie after another had been left in a shower of blood and flesh on the ground. Again and again, more shots rang out. Between all this Wesker could hear his own heavy breathing. He began to tremble violently all over his body. Then he could hold out no longer, and Wesker slid slowly out of the chair and onto the floor. There he lay curled up like an embryo. The violent shaking and trembling continued. For a while, he flapped his limbs wildly and uncoordinated.

Then, suddenly, the pain disappeared. It was as if a strong wind had driven out the dark clouds in his mind and opened up the clear blue of the sky. Everything appeared to Wesker in absolute clarity and distinctness. For Wesker, it was a feeling as if he had

lived his entire life until that point blindfolded. Something tore in his head, and burst out, like the birth of a new star in a boundless universe that expanded inside his brain. And then Wesker remembered. He remembered what it must have been like to be born as a primitive life inside a hot and oppressive sea, comparing himself to the very first organic compounds that had the ability to reproduce. And now the endoskeleton had arisen inside of him as he had been given a portal, back from the completion of the very first small brain right through to the current dominant organism humans had become. He remembered the whole 3.8 billion years.

And then Wesker knew it. He knew what he was now; he was standing at the summit of 3.8 billion years of evolution. Wesker laughed. He laughed heartily and was holding his stomach with laughter. Then he reached for his sunglasses and glanced at the two "monkeys" who were busily hopping about on the screen. What poor, primitive creatures, thought Wesker. Mere intermediate products on the long road to evolution…

The Mansion Incident 2

There was hardly any person who was able to calmly watch a friend getting eaten by a monster. The elite soldiers of S.T.A.R.S., who all had years of experience and went through tough training, showed no signs of panic or concern. And yet, it was absolutely certain, that this insane stress they were exposed to had taken its toll on them.

"Kenneth?" Chris called.

A zombie had ripped out Kenneth's throat. However, Kenneth was still alive. His cry for help was merely a hoarse, weak gurgle. Jill didn't hesitate; she did what was only rational and reasonable. She moved closer to the creature. Then she put her gun's muzzle on the cannibal's temple and pulled the trigger. The back of the zombie's head was blown off; the monster fell to the ground.

Jill looked at Kenneth, neither was he moving, nor was he breathing anymore. There was a lot of blood coming out of the wound on his neck. Jill looked into Kenneth's

eyes, his pupils were dilated. She checked his pulse, mumbling a short prayer for her comrade. She then turned to Chris, shaking her head.

“I don’t get it”, Chris said.

“Let’s head back to the main hall” Jill replied, looking at the zombie she shot earlier. “I don’t think he was all alone in here.”

“Damn right” Chris agreed, pointing his gun at Jill who just got up. However, Jill wasn’t surprised at all. When Chris pulled the trigger, Jill ducked. The bullet hit a zombie’s head just when it came towards her, arms reaching in her direction. Just like a wakening call, zombies were coming from the nearby rooms and hallways all of a sudden. They were moving towards Jill and Chris, their bodies decaying.

“Wanna leave?” Chris asked casually, as if this were a walk through the park.

Both were professionals, however. No matter how intimidating those monsters were, as long as they could fight them with their weapons, there was nothing to be scared of. Chris and Jill took care of the zombies’ heads, one by one, with precise shots. When the zombies came too close they used their knives, stabbing them in the neck and finishing them with a kick. Step by step, Chris and Jill were fighting their way back to the main hall. When the two Alpha Team members finally arrived, they were surprised that Wesker was nowhere to be found. 30 minutes were already over, which means he was supposed to be there.

“That’s unlike him, leaving a rendezvous point”, Jill wondered.

“You think something happened?”

“Well, I do have a bad feeling about this…”

“I thought something was off with this mission from the beginning”, Chris agreed.

“Maybe we should take bad foreboding more serious.”

“What would you do now? Listen to your bad feeling and get away from here?” he asked.

“You know what? When I hear a strange sound during the night, I can’t get back to sleep until I found out what caused it.”

“Roger that. Then we have to go on until you can go back to sleep again.”

Jill had to laugh. “Thanks, Chris. I didn’t think you could be so considerate.”

Both of them seemed relaxed, like this was indeed a walk in the park – but no one would take a stroll through the park with guns in their hands, of course. And zombies attacking all of a sudden also did not fit into the picture.

“Looks like this place isn’t safe”, Chris commented.

“Want to find out the reason for all of this?”

“I’m worried about Wesker”

“Not really, I think Wesker can take care of himself”, Jill replied.

“Anyway, let’s check the upper floor. I think the shots we heard earlier came from that direction.”

There were stairs leading to the second floor in the middle of the main hall.

“This mansion is weird”, said Jill.

Chris agreed, “Indeed. Who builds a mansion in an isolated area like this?”

“All those terrible murders happened in this area. I’m sure there is a connection between them and this house.”

“You can bet on that. I don’t know what this mansion was built for, but something is really suspicious about it.”

“Can you contact Bravo Team?” Jill asked?

“No, not a chance. I just can’t get through.” Chris put the walkie-talkie back into his pocket.

“We have to look for any survivors.”

“Yes. I’m just wondering how long someone could’ve survived after arriving at this house.”

“Don’t forget that we are still alive, Chris. If we could make it, then so could someone from Bravo Team.”

Chris agreed, anything was possible in this mansion. A dead dog was running towards them a moment later. The flesh on its flank was ripped off, exposing the ribs underneath. Some intestines were hanging out, dragging behind. However, this didn’t stop the dog from attacking the two Alpha Team members with an enormous speed — but neither of them panicked. A short glance at each other and then Chris stopped the dog with a single shot. The creature was lying on the ground, jerking, trying to get back on its feet, but before it could do that, Jill shot it in the head.

“You’re lucky that you’re not a dog person.”

“That’s right, I prefer cats. Well, the living ones, if you know what I mean.”

The two were following a hallway on the second floor which led them into another room. Again and again zombies were showing up, attacking them, longing for their flesh.

“Those things are tough sons of bitches”, Chris complained.

“Hey, don’t forget that you’re in the company of a lady. Do you at least know how to apologize?”

“Whoops, pardon me… I am so, so sorry that I used such bad vocabulary, my lady”, Chris answered, blowing off a zombie’s head. Jill took down a monster with her stun gun, put her boot on its neck and shot a bullet in its head. The action looked cold-blooded and an ignorant witness might have felt compassion for the zombies. Not the two Alpha Team members, however. They took down monster after monster with determination and precision.

“Look, over there!” Jill shouted, approaching a huge door.

“Looks like an explosion”, Chris noted.

The destroyed door was hanging in the frame, wooden chips were lying on the other side. Chris stepped through the broken door, “This was no explosion, nothing is burned here. The door was destroyed with brute force.”

They were in a library.

“Damn, this one is superior to the library in my old high school.”

“Wait, you visited a library during your time in school? I can’t believe it”, Jill said mockingly.

“Of course! This was where I had my dates. No one came in to disturb us.”

“That’s not what libraries are meant for.”

“I didn’t do that…”

Shelves were lying on the ground, books were scattered everywhere.

“Looks like Godzilla had a date in here”, Jill said laconic.

“No Godzilla… but… “Chris stopped talking. He was staring at something behind Jill. Jill turned around.

“What a snake… unbelievable…”

It was understandable that Jill could not believe her eyes. She saw a head, so big that a bed would’ve fit on top of it. The snake made an intimidating hissing sound.

“I bet a dime that this thing is venomous”, Jill said, putting her gun back into the holster and took out her machine gun.

“I’m in! And who of us should find out?” Chris asked, putting a new magazine into his machine pistol.

“I suggest you let it bite you, then we know!” Jill replied and continued firing. 600 bullets per minute were fired through the room, directly into the target.

“I don’t think I let it come this far! The beast won’t eat me that easily!” Chris was also firing at the snake.

“We should get some distance between us and that beast”, Jill said in an out-of-place casual tone and dodged to the side.

“You’re right. When dealing with a venomous snake, the slightest scratch can be a death sentence”.

Chris moved in the other direction. Both were concentrating their shots at the snake’s head. Scales were destroyed, blood splattered. One bullet hit the snake’s right eye, the eyeball exploded with a loud sound. When the snake opened its mouth in pain, Chris and Jill wasted no time and aimed directly at it. The body of the huge snake started shaking and then fell to the ground like a felled tree. Chris approached the reptile and shot one last salvo into its eye.

“That was quick”, he said.

“I think it was already weakened”, Jill replied. “It probably had already been through a fight.”

“Looks like our heroes are over there.”

Chris pointed towards a corner in the room where Rebecca Chambers was sitting, supporting Richard Aiken.

“Finally! Reinforcement is here!” Rebecca shouted. Her happiness was obvious.

“I’m Chris from the Alpha Team, and this is…”

“Jill Valentine, also from the Alpha Team. Nice to meet you”, Jill said and reached for Rebecca’s hand.

“I’m Rebecca Chambers from the Bravo Team.” Rebecca responded to the handshake.

“You’re the rookie, aren’t you? I’ve heard about you. What happened? Was Richard bitten by the snake?”

Rebecca nodded. Jill kneeled next to Richard and checked his wounds. The Bravo Team member was very weak. Jill carefully touched his forehead and his cheeks. No reaction. Only heavy breathing could be heard from him. Jill brought her lips close to Richard's ear.

"You have to hang in there just a little longer, Richard. I will get you out of here, I promise", she whispered. When she got up she said with a smile "Don't worry, he will make it."

"Thank goodness…", Rebecca said relieved.

"Consider it experience", Chris said. "You'll get used to it quickly. I just don't know whether this is a good thing or not."

"It's good", Jill replied and turned back to Rebecca. "We have to continue our search for the others. You made it, so it might be possible that others did too."

"Even our captain disappeared without a trace. Wesker is tough, he won't die easily. However, we can't let him fight alone", Chris said and looked at Richard's leg.

"The snake's venom got him pretty bad, but if we move him it gets even worse. We can't take him with us through the building, so it's best to leave him here for now. Take good care of him until we get rescued. Okay?" Chris was giving Rebecca an insistent look.

"Roger", the Bravo Team member replied explicitly.

Jill had put supplies, medication, and ammo next to Rebecca. "This should last you for a while."

"I'm sure, thank you very much", Rebecca replied.

They could see on her face that she trusted them without a doubt. Jill looked Rebecca straight into the eyes and said, "You're on the right way to become a good soldier."

"The question is whether this is a good thing or not", Chris added with a smile on his face.

The Mansion Incident 3

“We have to help Richard”, Jill said.

“You usually use a serum if venom is involved”, Chris answered. “The question is, if we can find a serum for a monster snake’s venom around here.”

Jill was confident, “This huge snake was definitely created here, so there has to be a serum somewhere.”

“I just hope you don’t have any false expectations….”

“If we look for it, we’ll find out. We have to do anything to get Richard out of here alive. That’s our duty, dammit!”

“So you’re not giving up as long as there’s a chance left?”

“Exactly. Just like the rookie”, Jill replied.

“That’s right, the new rookie is a tough one. She seems calm and determined, although she’s probably been through a lot. She was tired but she didn’t give up.”

“Yes, she’s trying to give her best in every situation.”

“Just like me, you wanted to say?”

“Yes, just like me. She’ll make it. She will survive”, Jill stressed. “She’s tough. She is capable. And luck will be on her side.”

“Just like you?”

“Just like me, Chris.”

“That’s what I call self-confidence. Then I’m sure that trying to contact the Captain is an easy thing for you, right?”

“He probably doesn’t get a signal wherever he is.”

“Or his walkie-talkie is broken. Or he’s dead.”

“Forget it, Chris. The Captain doesn’t die that easy.”

Although they were talking casually, zombies still attacked them again and again, but Chris and Jill remained calm. As soon as a zombie appeared, they took care of it. They blew them to kingdom come. When the two Alpha Team members reached the courtyard the sun had already set. The weather turned bad and it became dark, no moon and no stars could be seen in the sky. Everything was covered in darkness.

“Not a nice atmosphere”, Jill said.

“Ever since this morning if you ask me”, Chris replied.

“Something’s coming!” both called in unison.

It was dogs, dark dogs with terrifying snouts. And of course, they were already dead. Chris and Jill fought them with precise shooting and fought their way through the next few areas. Then they reached a pool filled with water, blocking the way. If they wanted to reach the door on the other side, they had no choice but to cross this pool. After everything they’ve been through so far, swimming didn’t seem to be the best idea. The water shimmered like oil and didn’t look very inviting.

“There’s a drain on the other side”, Jill called. “I’m sure we can open it with this!”

Jill ran towards a crank next to the sluice and started to use it. The sluice opened and the water disappeared. When the water level decreased stones became visible, creating a path through the pool. There was a ladder attached to the pool’s edge and they were able to climb down.

“After you, please”, Jill said.

“I thought it’s ladies first.”

“Funny that you come up with this now.”

They could make out a movement under the pitch-black water surface. It was snakes, many snakes. They weren't as big as the snake in the library but they seemed very aggressive. Chris and Jill tried to fight them off, shooting at them, while they were making their way through the pool. More and more snakes were coming at them but Chris and Jill managed to make it to the other side.

After passing a well, Chris and Jill noticed an artificial waterfall to their right-hand side. They could make out a door behind the waterfall. They approached it and found a ladder leading towards an underground area. They went down immediately and reached (a) tunnel made of stone. It seemed like this tunnel had been there for a long time.

"I'm wondering what this is", Jill said.

"It looks like some sort of mines", Chris answered.

"Does that mean that they were digging for coal in here?"

Something was sitting in the hallway in front of them, it looked similar to a frog. However, this creature, which looked like a frog-ape hybrid, was much bigger than Jill. And its sharp claws were definitely no fashion accessory. Those claws looked very functional, as if they could rip off a head with one blow.

Suddenly, the monster leapt in Jill's direction, its claws aiming at her face. Jill ducked, the claws missing her face by mere inches. Chris opened fire the second the monster landed on its feet. One of its scales flew off, but the monster didn't seem to care and prepared to jump again. For something made of flesh and blood, it seemed to be really tough. It jumped again, Chris dodged, and when he saw the monster's white, unprotected belly, he knew what he had to do.

Every animal had a different weak spot. One quick glance and Jill convinced Chris that she had the same idea. Both started shooting at the monster's back while it was recovering on the ground. Scales scattered and it prepared for another jump. It leapt in Jill's direction, and she ducked again. She pointed her gun towards its white belly and pulled the trigger. Intestines fell on her and the monster collapsed, squeaking in pain. Two, three twists and then it stopped. Chris kicked its body and shot another bullet into

the now exposed guts. Liquids splashed around and the monster stopped moving for good.

“What a beast…” Chris carefully kicked the monster’s body.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if there are more of them”, Jill added.

They continued their way through the tunnels and learned rather quickly that Jill was right. Their next enemy was a spider with the size of a dog. The Alphas took it down, never losing their coolness. It was like crushing a cockroach with a rolled up newspaper.

“This is like Hollywood’s chamber of horrors”, Jill said.

“Right, this feels like a carnival.”

At the end of the underground tunnel was a box and both Alphas used it to climb back up.

“Looks like we’re in a different building now”, Jill stated.

Both passed through rooms and corridors, climbed ladders up and down – the mansion seemed to have an unlimited amount of rooms. They had to fight the living dead repeatedly, but they hadn’t seen an actual living person in some time.

“The atmosphere in this mansion is really upsetting”, Chris mentioned at some point. “If only it was properly lit. It’s really hard to see in here.”

“This mansion is gigantic, it’s almost like a maze”, Jill added.

“This is taking too long!”

“I think that’s exactly the reason they built it like that.”

“You mean for entertainment?” Chris asked.

“Exactly”, Jill replied. “I have the feeling someone built this so that we have our work cut out for us. This almost feels like a video game!”

“So you wanna tell me that this is some sort of trap?

“It might be possible.”

“That’s still no answer to where Wesker is.”

“In a dead zone”, Jill said.

“Right, but…”

Chris opened a door and they entered a room with another pool in the middle. Water flooded the nearby hallway.

“I guess we have no choice but to go through there”, Chris said.

The room’s exit was at the other side of the pool. Both Alpha Team members waded through the pool, knee-deep in the water.

“Jill, something’s there.”

“Looks like it, yeah.”

Dark shadows were moving in circles through the pool, and they were moving fast. Several dark shadows.

“Let’s hope they continue moving in circles”, Jill said.

“Yeah, it would suck if they’d come closer”, Chris agreed.

As if by command, the first shadow dashed at them.

“It’s coming”, Chris screamed.

Both Alpha Team members readied their machine guns. The water was moving, spray splashed and the beast moved its head out of the water. It was a shark. With its jaw wide open, it charged at Chris. He fired a round into the fish’s body and ducked. Above him, just where his head was seconds ago, the shark’s jaws crushed together. Jill also started firing at the shark in the meantime. She aimed for the part between the shark’s head and

gills. Then everything happened as fast as lightning. The shark turned its head and disappeared into the deep water. They must have hit the right spot.

“Let’s get out of here!”

Chris started running and Jill followed suit. Both of them were now running for their lives. They had a small chance when fighting against a shark in the water, especially in this case, because those were not any ordinary sharks. They noticed that running in the water was difficult and it was obvious that the sharks weren’t going to let that chance slip. The sharks were coming closer, one of them jumped at Chris again. He barely escaped, and the shark’s huge body missed its mark. Jill started firing at the second shark which made its way through the hallway. However, that didn’t seem to impress it because it knew that its prey was more or less trapped inside this narrow hallway.

It came towards Jill, mouth wide open, two rows of razor-sharp teeth aimed at her. Jill could clearly see the shark moving its little, malicious eyes while preparing for its attack. She stayed calm, nonetheless. And then the shark lunged at her as if it wanted to rip its victim’s upper body apart. She grabbed the railing and jumped at the very last moment. The shark jumped underneath her and she landed on top of its back, ramming her knife into its head with all her strength. The shark jumped and Jill fell off and landed on the other side, directly in the tank. Her body sank into the dark water. Several big shadows made their way towards her immediately, and when Jill saw the first shark’s teeth in front of her, she abandoned all hope – but fate was on her side. Muffled shots could be heard, the bullets flew past Jill and through the water, leaving white spiral traces. More and more of those traces showed up and one finally hit the shark which was coming at Jill. The bullet hit its head – and it worked. The shark turned around and disappeared, just an arm’s length away from Jill.

She fought her way back to the water’s surface, grabbed the railing and pulled herself up, back in the hallway.

“Can’t you aim a little better?” she complained while running with Chris towards the exit, both of them out of breath. “You almost hit me!”

“Hey, I just thought dying by a bullet might be better than getting torn apart by a shark”, Chris replied.

“That was murder!”

“Bullshit, you survived it.”

“Yes, otherwise you would’ve had it coming!”

While they were arguing they reached a door, leading to their safety. They left the room and closed the door behind them.

“Well, I guess we avoided ending up as fish food then”, Chris said, relieved.

“I just think that, as long as we’re in this damn mansion, we still might end up as dinner…”

Jill couldn’t continue speaking. In that moment, she disappeared from Chris’ sight. Chris looked down first, then upwards and then he noticed something long moving around. For a second he thought it was another snake but then he saw several dark green, long arms moving back and forth underneath the ceiling – and those tentacles held Jill captive. In the midst of those tentacles there were thick fleshy flower petals. This time, they had to fight a plant monster.

“Jiiiiiiiiiiilllllllllllll!”

Chris’ scream was barely audible while he fired his machine gun. He fired directly at the plant’s core. A yellow powder appeared, probably pollen, and a terrible stench covered the whole area. The smell of decomposition. The pollen blocked Chris’ view but he continued firing. After a while, Jill fell down, cursing briefly, she grabbed her machine gun and started firing at the big plant as well.

“Dammit, what is this thing?” Chris shouted.

It threw its tentacles at Chris and Jill, just like an anemone hanging from the ceiling. Again and again the spiky tentacles were reaching out for them. All those bullets didn’t seem to bother it and there was no way to tell if they even affected it.

“Well, it doesn’t get boring in here, that’s for sure!” Chris cursed, reaching for a hand grenade he found on the way. He pulled the lock pin, “three, two, one… eat this!”

Chris threw the grenade and it flew directly into the plant’s core. Then it exploded and a terrible smell appeared. It must have come from the plant’s sap, which was scattered across the room due to the explosion. It seemed to be made of acid and it left red burns and swellings on Chris and Jill’s skin. Thick clouds of dust and pollen spread across the room.

“Don’t stop firing! That thing is a tough one!” Chris shouted.

Jill could hear Chris’ voice but she had no idea where exactly he was. Once in a while a spiky tentacle shot out of the dust. Muzzle flash was colouring the surrounding dust in red. Jill was carefully crawling on the floor while she continued shooting. The dust finally disappeared after a while but the plant showed no sign of defeat, however.

“Why does this damn thing have to be so resilient?” Chris shouted, stressed out.

Jill was surprised that Chris had nothing better to do than complaining, and she was also surprised that he still had his sense of humour. She tried to encourage herself and checked for a better location – and then she saw something in a corner. She wondered if those were the plant’s roots. In any case, it was a big bundle of intertwined strands, each of them as thick as a human’s thigh. Within those strands there was a dead body. It was already half mummified and it was holding a Russian AKM rifle, with a grenade launcher attached to it.

“That comes in handy”, Jill thought and was already running towards it. She grabbed the weapon from the bony fingers of the expressionless mummy. The grenade launcher was still loaded and three additional grenades were in the dead person’s belt. They didn’t look new anymore, but that was fine as long as they were still working – and Jill didn’t have time to hesitate anyway. She checked if the weapon was loaded correctly, turned the safety off and kneeled on the ground. She then aimed the muzzle exactly at the big plant on the ceiling.

“Go to hell, you monster!”

Jill pulled the trigger. There wasn't much distance between her and the ceiling but she figured it was still barely safe enough. A flash of lightning, followed by a loud bang. The plant's sap was flying everywhere. Chris and Jill communicated with a quick glance and took cover from the blast in the corner furthest away from the plant, but they still got covered in some acid which was burning their skin.

Jill moved the lower part of the grenade launcher backwards and ejected the empty shell, then she reloaded. She aimed at the ceiling where the plant had been, the room was still covered in black billowing dust – and when it finally disappeared, she noticed that the plant had been destroyed completely and nothing was left of it.

The Mansion Incident 4

The plant was defeated but the hellish freak show went on. Chris and Jill had proven that they were among S.T.A.R.S.'s best soldiers and for them, the terrifying monsters were nothing more than target practice. Room after room and hallway after hallway, those two made their way through the mansion, although some of the fights had left their marks on them – the ones with the sharks or the plant for example. There had been a few close calls but somehow they managed to come out of it unharmed.

The longer they were in the mansion, the more they found out about it. As it happens, they were able to find a serum for the big snake's venom and also found out that the snake is called "Yawn" – and they eventually discovered that no one was left alive, except for Rebecca and Richard. Little by little they uncovered the secret behind the purpose of the mansion and the laboratory underneath it.

Both of them weren't experts, of course. That's why they couldn't understand the exact details of the research that was done in the mansion. However, they were able to figure out that it was about a virus from documents they found and also that humans were repeatedly used for experiments. Whoever was infected with that virus died and then came back to life – with the slight difference that they weren't human anymore but a cannibalistic monster. They didn't have the time to read all the documents but it was

clear to them that the Umbrella Corporation used that virus to create new bio-organic weapons. They were monstrous creatures with extreme powers and Umbrella did everything to turn them into functional weapons.

“Don’t you find this weird?” Chris asked.

“Excuse me, but what is left to find weird after all we’ve been through?” Jill asked back while shooting a bullet into a rotten corpse’s head. Wasn’t everything they had seen during the last hours weird enough?

“What I mean is, isn’t it weird that we got into this mess in the first place?” Chris clarified.

“No. I thought we’re here because we’ve lost contact with Bravo Team and then went to look for them.”

“That’s right, that was the reason, but … don’t you remember that you mentioned that it seemed like this was meant to be some sort of entertainment?”

“Of course I remember”, Jill answered.

Meanwhile, both of them were entering a power room and with one quick glance with their trained eyes they knew what all those buttons on the control panel were for. They pushed some of those buttons and activated a few more.

“All those monsters and especially the conveniently placed weapons lying around, everything looks as it had been prepared from the very beginning… like some sort of invitation for us. As if someone wanted to watch us making our way through this real-life video game maze.”

“Do I understand this correctly, Chris? You also want to say that everything here is a trap and someone led us here on purpose?”

“Don’t you agree that it is strange that monsters are jumping at us from behind every corner, like they were waiting for us? Or that we regularly find weapons and ammo along the way?”

“Yes, indeed…”

They entered a lift and made their way down.

“And all for what?”

“In the beginning I thought this was some sort of training, but it was way too dangerous of course. No one would let people die during training.”

They exited the lift. The only way to go was a tight hallway and it ended at a door. Chris and Jill looked around – there were no monsters in sight – and then they opened the door. They noticed a terrible stench, it smelled like inside a hospital and it smelled metallic. The room was very big and several machines and devices with a purpose unknown to them were in it. Everything looked like a big experimental laboratory. They carefully moved between the machines until they reached a huge glass cylinder which was filled with liquid – and something was floating in it: a giant, more than 2 meters (6.6 ft.) tall. It looked like straight out of a terrible nightmare.

That monsters body was asymmetric, the left part seemed bloated and was covered in swollen veins and infected skin. At the end of its massive left arm there were spiky sickle-shaped claws. Under the skin of the left part of the chest a pulsating, pounding heart was clearly visible and it was as big as a huddled cat. So that thing was alive – well, whatever counted as “alive” for those creatures. Jill pointed her gun at it and then she heard someone clapping all of a sudden.

“Not bad! Not bad at all! But that was to be expected." A man stepped forward.

“Wesker?!” Chris called

“This is perfect…” Wesker declared happily while he was closing in on Chris and Jill. “The Umbrella Corporation’s biological weapons against perfectly trained flesh and blood combatants. That’s high quality data I gathered here.”

All of a sudden, as if magic was involved, Wesker was holding a gun in his hands.

“I had the feeling there was a traitor within the RPD or S.T.A.R.S., but that it’s you…” Chris glared at Wesker. “So you led the teams here, am I right?”

“Excellent deduction. Everything was planned by the Umbrella Corporation. However, not that I would need the help of such an organization…” the corners of his mouth twitched.

That was probably supposed to be a grin. The captain of the Alpha Team moved to the front side of the glass tank. “Not as long as I have this ultimate lifeform… Tyrant!”

Wesker started operating the control panel in the front of the glass tank. The liquid was removed from the tank. Now it was clearly visible that the monster’s heart was pumping vigorously. The Tyrant’s arm was twitching. Wesker was looking at it delightedly. “It’s beautiful, don’t you think?”

The Tyrant moved its head. He was looking at Wesker who was standing right in front of him. The creature opened its mouth and then all of a sudden it moved its arm forwards. The bulletproof glass burst and the Tyrant was now standing in front of Wesker. Its long curved claws suddenly pierced through Wesker’s chest – so deep that the tip of the claws came out of his back. Without any effort the Tyrant moved its arm and lifted Wesker up into the air. It showed a fierce and terrible strength and howled like a wild animal. And then it moved its arm away from its body and Wesker was thrown away. His body was thrown into the air like a puppet and he got slammed against a wall, landing on the ground with twisted limbs. A pool of blood started to frame his body. Then sirens went off and a voice could be heard throughout the room:

“Emergency! The self-destruct system has been activated! All personnel must evacuate immediately!”

“What? Are you kidding me?!” Chris shouted.

“I don’t think this beast has any sense of humor”, Jill commented.

After it took down its master, the Tyrant made its way towards Chris and Jill. They exchanged a quick glance and then started firing at it, making their way backwards.

“This son of a bitch!” Chris said and quickly looked at Wesker lying in a pool of his own blood. “First he betrays us and then his own creature kills him. He really left us with something nice here.”

“Yes, his betrayal will affect us even after his death.”

In contrast to the creatures they fought before, the Tyrant had some sort of intelligence. That clearly set it apart from the zombies which were solely controlled by their urges and also from the monstrous animals which had their physical appearance and strength enhanced. The creatures the two Alpha Team members fought before had shown near invincible vitality and therefore didn’t back away from incoming attacks. They charged directly at their enemies – just like the fighting machines they were supposed to be.

The Tyrant also showed an enormous strength but it wasn’t stupid enough to run directly into enemies’ fire. It was constantly moving fast, always careful, and attacking with high speed as soon as Chris or Jill were nearby. It tried to get between the two, probably thinking that they’d stop firing out of fear of ricochets or getting hit by each other’s bullets as long as it was standing between them. And not even a machine gun fired from close distance had an effect on it.

The fight got harder and harder for Jill and Chris but none of them thought about giving up. They were fighting relentlessly and thought about how to win this fight. The two Alpha Team members knew that the one with the best tactics would win this fight eventually. So they were carefully studying the Tyrant’s moves and checked for a pattern. They attacked from various angles and observed its reactions.

Chris finally said “I think that guy just showed us its weak spot.”

Jill knew exactly what her teammate meant by that.

“I’m going” Chris said. “And you distract that monster, please.”

Jill didn’t even answer. Instead she moved away from Chris who moved away and started firing at the Tyrant’s face. With an angry roar, the Tyrant leapt at Jill. Just in that moment Chris came running from the side, still undetected by the Tyrant, and jumped in front of the monster’s chest. And there, on the creature’s chest, was something sublime, some sort of lump. Its form resembled that of a heart. It was the only place that – when shot at – led to a reaction from the Tyrant. It was also obvious that it tried to protect this spot when attacking.

Chris rammed his knife directly into that lump on the Tyrant's chest. He then moved the blade left- and rightwards, all while the blade was stuck deep into the monster's flesh. The Tyrant roared loudly. Jill used this opportunity to fire some bullets into its opened mouth. All of a sudden, the beast's monstrous body collapsed.

"Let's get out of here!"

They started running and just in that moment Chris' radio started to make some noise – the radio that had been silent for so long.

"Come in, please come in!"

Chris quickly reached for the radio. "This is Chris from Alpha Team, please respond."

They couldn't hear an answer but someone cursing.

"Dammit … can't someone here me … this is Brad … running out of fuel … please respond … emergency landing … heliport … I can't … much longer … last chance … please respond …"

Then the call ended suddenly. Chris immediately tried to get back in contact, but he only received some noise.

"He said "heliport"", Jill remarked.

"Yes, I understood the same. That was Brad."

Brad, he was the pilot of the Alpha Team's helicopter.

"Anyway, we should get back to the surface. You give us backup and look out for Brad, I will go and get Rebecca and Richard along the way", Chris said and tapped the box with the serum. "Take care."

"Yeah, you too." Jill found a lift on the hallway side of the room, called it via pressing a button and entered it.

"The self-destruct system has been activated! All personnel must evacuate immediately!" could still be heard from the speakers.

“No one would still think that this was a drill”, Jill thought. “We should hurry.” She took the lift to the top level to look for the helicopter. Could it be that Brad was talking about the heliport on this roof? Seconds later the elevator reached the roof of the building. Jill looked around, everything looked very run-down. There were many cracks in the concrete with greens sprouting out of them. In one spot there was even a huge hole in the concrete. However, no helicopter was in sight and there were also no corners or spots where it could have been hidden.

Jill was doomed to wait for Chris and the others. She casually looked at the huge hole in the concrete – and then it happened. A large body was jumping out of the hole. It was the Tyrant. They haven’t killed it. It was looking around slowly and then it looked directly into Jill’s eyes. “He spotted me”, she thought and started running immediately, with her gun ready in her hands. The Tyrant was coming after her right away. Its arm with razor-sharp claws moved forwards to tear Jill’s abdomen apart, but she was able to jump out of its way, just mere seconds before it would have been too late. She landed on the monster’s arm, jumped again and grabbed the Tyrant’s neck. Using the momentum she swung around and landed behind its back. She was hanging there like a little child that was being carried piggyback style by her father. Jill pressed the gun’s muzzle against the Tyrant’s temple.

“Go to hell!” Jill fired. It was a loud bang and the recoil was so strong that the gun and her hand were pushed away. The bullet was stuck in the monster’s temple. “Damn you beast!”

Jill wasn’t giving in. She put the muzzle against the Tyrant’s neck and fired again. It fell forwards and hit the ground, and that was it. It started screaming furiously – and then it grabbed Jill’s foot. A quick pull and she slid off the monster’s back. Although it was now holding her upside down she managed to move her upper body upwards with all her strength and continued to fire at its head.

However, the Tyrant started to spin her around, two, three times, like a hammer during hammer throwing. Blood was running into Jill’s head and it felt like it was going to explode any minute. Then the grip around her foot loosened and Jill was flying through the air. She was able to regain control over her body before she crashed into a wall,

however, and crouched to absorb the impact, her feet hitting the wall. She then landed on her feet in a ducked position. Within seconds the Tyrant charged at her again.

“You don’t seriously think that I’m giving up now that we’re so close to getting out of here” Jill mumbled and focused on the attacking giant.

Adrenaline helped her senses to take in every little detail of the monster with exact precision: the wide opened drooling mouth; eyes wide open with excitement; the razor-sharp claws at the end of the monstrous arm swinging through the air. Jill could see everything crystal clear, as if time was running in slow motion. She flinched. The Tyrant’s claws missed the tip of her nose by mere inches. However, she had the muzzle of her gun pointed at the monster’s hand which was moving past her. She fired twice. It happened so fast that it sounded like just one shot. One shot pierced the Tyrant’s hand, the other shot tore one of its fingers off.

“You’re simply made of flesh and blood” Jill thought. No invincible monster. And now I will kill you!

The fight had taken a toll on Jill. She had lost most of her coolness and was now all psyched up. She had to bring this fight to an end quickly, because she could not keep this up for much longer. She quickly slid under the Tyrant’s arm and was now standing directly in front of him. In the moment she put her gun on the Tyrant’s abdomen, she pulled the trigger. Flames shot in all directions and the heavy recoil made her lower her gun. And then she saw it! The Tyrant’s skin didn’t even have a scratch. It was just slightly burned.

“You screwed up” Jill thought, and then the Tyrant’s strong fist hit her temple.

Jill felt like her head was exploding. She was reaching her arms out to grab the Tyrant but then fell to the ground. It kicked her in the side and sent her flying. Jill crashed into a wall and then slid to the ground. The Tyrant showed no mercy. With its sharp claws, it charged at Jill for a final blow – but then a hailstorm of 5.45 mm projectiles was shot at it. The Tyrant stumbled.

“Sorry it took so long, partner!”

It was Chris' voice. He and Rebecca had now also reached the heliport, both of them with machine guns ready in their hands. The Tyrant turned around. It seemed to think about which side posed the bigger threat. It then spun around and charged at Chris and Rebecca. Both of them started firing immediately. The Tyrant dodged several times while it was making its way towards them with high speed.

Jill was still feeling a bit dizzy but she was able to stand up again. Giving up was no option. Chris and Rebecca had made it here in time to help her, eventually. She was not going to let them down.

"You kill it!" Chris shouted at her and kicked an object in her direction. Jill was running towards it and took it. It was an RPG. Seconds later Chris slid some grenades towards her. Jill released the safety and reloaded. She shouldered the heavy weapon without any struggle although it was weighing about 10 kg fully loaded.

"Move!" she screamed.

The Tyrant turned to face her, and Jill saw how Chris and Rebecca were running in opposite directions to take cover. One heartbeat later, she pulled the trigger. The 3.5" grenade was flying towards the Tyrant with a loud hissing sound. There was no time to dodge. The giant held up both arms and it looked like a man was greeting his loved one after being separated for too long. The grenade hit its chest, there was a flashing light, and the monster was finally torn to pieces. The building was shaking. Everything was quiet.

And then a noise could be heard. It came from the radio strapped to Jill's shoulder.

" … bad signal … on my way to you …"

The sound of the nearing helicopter was even clearer than the sound from the radio. Chris and Rebecca were coming over to where Jill was standing. There was no sight of Richard but Jill did not dare to ask about his whereabouts.

Even the loud sound of the rotor sounded like a lullaby to Jill's ears. The struggles of the past few hours had strained her body and she was bone-tired. She could have closed

her eyes and fallen asleep immediately. However, she wanted to embrace the feeling of being lucky to be alive just a bit longer.

It was dawn and the forest of the Arklay Mountains was shining in a green light. The helicopter took off and left this horrifying place. Rebecca was lying on the floor in front of Jill, she had already fallen asleep. Her face looked peaceful, like that of a child, but you could clearly tell that she had been crying. The full extent of what had happened would probably start torturing her once the effect of the last fight had worn off. But Rebecca would get through this, Jill was sure of it. She was praying for strength and energy for Rebecca. Chris was sitting next to Jill. He was looking at the gray-blue sky outside with a tired expression on his face. Jill rested her head against his shoulder. And then deep, sweet sleep came over her, washing everything away for the time being.

Wesker 7

It was dawn on July 25th when the disturbing events surrounding the mansion drew to a temporary close. The S.T.A.R.S. unit of the Raccoon City Police Department had been virtually wiped out completely. Only Chris and a few friends had survived. Evidence that bore witness to what went on in the property were all burnt up now. At least so it seemed. For just before the self-destruct explosion took place, in the catacombs beneath the lab, something remarkable took place...

Dust danced in the darkness. Again and again the tannoy blared from the loudspeakers and called on all employees to leave the building immediately. It did not have much time. But he was here, and his consciousness returned slowly. He knew he was no longer a man. He had been dead. Yes, he could still clearly remember the cold and darkness of death. To conquer that death had been Wesker's biggest goal.

The situation had required that he himself had died. Albert Wesker; employee of the Umbrella Corporation, was dead, he no longer existed. And there were people who could testify to that. The organism that was Wesker had died the moment the Tyrant had caught him. His body was no longer that of a man. Though his skull was shattered and

half his brain matter had been crushed, he lived. All the tormenting pain had vanished in the moment in which he advanced towards death as a human. And the virus created by Birkin had done its work inside Wesker's body, converting the intense pain to a completely opposite feeling; joy. Wesker could feel the joy of being alive. He was resurrected as a member of a new human race, and he experienced the sweet taste of this sensation like a swim through golden honey. And all this, from the very beginning, had been part of Wesker's plan. He now did no longer have to guess what it was like to be reborn in another form.

Wesker came back from the abyss of nothingness. And at the moment of his awakening, he realized that his old life had been one, long sleep. It was even more than that; the whole of mankind lay in slumber. The people, the supposed "pinnacle of creation", were not much better than monkeys! Wesker knew he had now risen above humanity, yes, he would be the new and true ruler of all things and beings. And now he had to prepare everything so that he could reign as lord and master of a new era. Of that Wesker was convinced. His ability to think did not seem to have been damaged; he could see things now even more clearly than ever before.

It seemed like the Tyrant had been defeated. Wesker had been able to feel its death, as if they had communicated a weak vibration between themselves. And soon shortly the whole laboratory here would fly up into the air. He had to hurry up to be away from the building before then. But before that he had something that needed to be done. Wesker got up and moved towards his goal, his goal was the laboratory. More specifically, a room on the forth basement level of the laboratory. Wesker had the intention of taking all the research data from the plant. Only with this data would it be possible for him to gain control of everything. Now he was sitting in this room, working on a keyboard and staring up at the screen before him. But no matter what he did, the same word always appeared on the screen again and again, the word; "Deleted."

"Damn it, Sergei has been busy here..." muttered Wesker.

A computerized voice spoke with quiet authority. "Due to the emergency situation, all data has been evacuated to U.M.F.-013. Albert Wesker. Those access rights to the mainframe were revoked by me."

"What the hell..."

"My name is Red Queen. My primary task is to protect the Umbrella Corporation and the management of their facilities. My second job is to protect the lives of the employees of the Umbrella Corporation. My third task is to..."

"Shut up!" cursed Wesker and drummed inconsistently at the control panel with both of his fists until it completely smashed. The machine was silent. Wesker's eyes burned red with anger.

“Dammit, now I need a new plan … You’ll have to pay for that!”

Wesker left the laboratory, thinking hard. The penetrating voice coming from the speakers still ordered him to leave the building immediately. The mansion was full of zombies and monstrous creatures. Wesker didn’t have a weapon but he simply broke the necks of the zombies coming at him. He stepped on an incoming big spider. Those weren’t serious enemies for him ever since he was reborn. However, Wesker noticed that every time he killed something, he felt some weird pain. It was a vague and indefinite sort of pain, as if he was dreaming – but it hurt, nevertheless. It was bearable but far from pleasant. There were weapons lying around the mansion in several places and Wesker took one with him.

It didn’t take long for him to notice something about that pain: Every time he blew away a zombie’s or monster’s head, his own head hurt. And every time he shot a hole in a body, his own stomach hurt. What was this connection? He could continue on, of course, but the pain started to annoy him.

“Out of my way!” Wesker screamed instinctively.

The zombies stopped moving at that exact moment. They stopped mid-movement, mouths wide open and arms outstretched. All living things were supposed to be a source of food for them. But… something, a last remnant functioning in their damaged brains, ordered them to obey. They obeyed Wesker. His voice suppressed their never-ending hunger. Wesker took a step, then another one. The zombies moved backwards with stiff movements. Wesker’s will spread like a wave-like pattern in

concentric circles. The zombies lined up like a wall. They were like loyal subjects, paving the way for their king. Wesker was now the king of the dead. His life had a purpose beyond the hunger and the drive for destruction of the usual zombies. He had control over them.

And that did not only apply to zombies but also to the Hunters, Chimeras and the many more bio-organic weapons. Whenever Wesker ordered them to step back, they did it. They may not have been able to follow detailed instructions, because they were lacking the ability to understand them, obviously, but at least they backed off – and that made it very easy to clear a path. He would make it out of the mansion in time, Wesker thought. He thought so at least until Lisa Trevor showed up in front of him!

Lisa Trevor was the daughter of the architect who was ordered with the construction of this mansion back in the day. She and her parents were locked away in Arklay laboratories underneath the mansion because she knew too many secrets. However, that was more than twenty years ago. George, her father, died while he attempted to escape. Lisa and her mother were then conveniently turned into human test subjects for viral experiments. An injection with the t-Virus usually led to the death of the infected, who was then revived as a living dead – just as it has happened in so many cases. However, research has shown that, if the t-Virus is administered in small amounts together with its antibodies, it is possible to cure different fatal diseases like terminal cancer or congenital immunodeficiency. However, those effects don't last long and larger doses are necessary over time. With this ongoing treatment, the body starts to change its form and the brain shows signs of an abnormal development.

In Lisa's case it was wondrously possible to control these side effects and give her super-human strength, in the beginning at least. However, a limit was reached soon. Her muscles showed some weird development and her bone structure got bigger. Her appearance was soon far from human-like. Her mother, who was also a test subject, had died in the meantime and therefore, there was no one left who could have saved her from this misery. And from there it became even worse. They continued to experiment on her seemingly immortal body.

After spontaneously implanting her with a mutating parasite of the NE-α-type, an up to then unknown virus was created, which would later be known as the G-Virus. Lisa was surprisingly able to resorb the parasite and use its powers, although her body had mutated so much because of the t-Virus. This lead to her transforming into a creature which was even less human-like. Lisa tried to take her own life several times, but her undying body denied her to find peace in death. She got desperate about it and that turned her into a real monster. She went totally crazy and even went so far as to attack one female employee and ripped her skin off of her head to use it as a mask for her own face.

When everything was revealed, Lisa's "disposal" was officially decided. Everything regarding the effects of the new virus on her body was recorded; however, it was too risky to keep her alive like that much longer. The killing procedure, which was supposed to lead her to her final death, took three whole days. After that, her body showed no signs of life anymore and Lisa was disposed of – but Lisa, who was supposed to be cremated in an incinerator, survived in the forest around the mansion. And on the day the S.T.A.R.S. team showed up, the immortal Lisa was still roaming through the now abandoned mansion. Now she was standing in front of Wesker who wanted to escape from there – and she was blocking his way.

"I thought they got rid of her…" Wesker mumbled.

Wesker had been, in fact, involved in her disposal-process. To him the test subject "Lisa" was like an old acquaintance.

"Come on, get out of my way!" Wesker shouted and moved his hand like he wanted to scare away a stray dog. But Lisa was different from the other zombies and didn't want to listen to Wesker. Instead, she moved directly towards him.

"Damn you, bitch!" Wesker screamed and started firing with his machine pistol at her. He, again, could feel the pain in his own body. Pitch-black liquid came out Lisa's body. She collapsed. Wesker knew that she was not dead at all. However, that was unnecessary anyway as long as she wasn't blocking his way. He didn't pay any more attention to her body lying on the ground and turned to leave. Then he heard a scream coming from behind him – it was Lisa. She was alive and stood up again.

Back then the scientists had tried everything to kill her and in the end it was all in vain. Lisa was a monster. She was unstoppable. Wesker did nothing but run. The other monsters wouldn't bother him as they'd move out of his way. He was running like a mad man towards the exit and then he finally reached the main hall. He could see the exit but shortly before he reached it, Lisa blocked his way again. She obviously didn't want him to leave just like that.

"Stop following me", Wesker mumbled. He pointed his gun at her and started firing. Again and again. Lisa made a jarring sound and it was without a doubt the scream of a young woman. Wesker could feel the pain and his whole nervous system was concentrating on it. In that moment, Lisa's consciousness poured into him.

… dying, dying, die, dying, let me die, mother, mother, dying, die, die, the world must die, dying with the world, I want to die, die, die!!

Lisa had somehow found out that Wesker could feel what she felt. She was begging for her death. A permanent death. She wanted to die already. Wesker nodded.

"You're immortal, but you are not invincible."

Lisa rushed at Wesker. If the world were to end she would end with it – that was what her vanishing consciousness told her. That was why she wanted to destroy everyone who was standing in her way. She wanted to kill. Eradicate. Her shackled arms were moving through the air, ready to crush Wesker's skull. Wesker jumped upwards and his new powers surprised him. Although he wasn't prepared for the situation, he managed to jump over Lisa and landed behind her back. When Lisa noticed that, she swung around with an inhuman force. All of a sudden dozens of tentacles resembling a sea anemone came out of her body, grabbing for Wesker. He managed to dodge the attack within the last second. He pointed his gun at her back and fired. Loud bangs could be heard, and with every shot her body flinched. She almost looked like she was dancing. Pitch-black liquid and flesh were splashing around. Lisa fell forward and collapsed on the floor. Black liquid was forming an oil-like puddle around her.

"It seems like we need something that exceeds the generation power of your cells." Wesker continued firing at Lisa's back.

“Don’t worry, you won’t wake up again. You will be destroyed, together with this mansion”, Wesker said with a calm voice. He then pointed his gun at something that was far above the monster lying on the ground.

On the ceiling there was a big chandelier hanging from a heavy iron chain. Wesker shot the chain and the heavy iron and glass crashed onto Lisa. A scream. Lisa tried desperately to escape the heavy weight, but she was too weak by now and could barely move. She was nearly powerless. Wesker left her behind and finally exited the mansion. There was not much time left and he was now running for his life. Just a few moments later a huge detonation shook the mansion. He could feel the hot shock wave moving above him– but Wesker didn’t care anymore. He had managed to escape and was now walking calmly.

Wesker had been reborn as something new. He hadn’t been able to steal the data, but he, only he, held the knowledge. And, above all, he also had some new, dangerous powers. Now he didn’t have to depend on the Umbrella Corporation anymore. A new world was ahead of him. Now that Wesker had abandoned his humanity and, at the same time, escaped death, there was no enemy left to be afraid of.

Raccoon City’s Downfall 1

It was in a high-pressure high-temperature solution resembling the primordial ocean.

It was dreaming. A dream of only smell and sound. An unpleasant dream. It was irritated.

The source of the discomfort was anxiety. The anxiety of birth. But it had no mental capacity to understand that experience. That is why it was suffering from unpleasant dreams. Then it woke. For it, this was the moment of birth. There was no difference between awakening and birth. It was starving. But, this was no simple hunger for food. A much more advanced and complicated craving. In other words, something resembling love. An intense love toward its objects. A desire to love it, own it, and bring it under

its control. That was its drive. Where did it learn this? It was from that which created it, its creator-----God. God engraved into it the name of what it must love. Now it has awakened. The solution began to drain out of the tank. It was the first time it breathed in air. The glass smoothly lifted. It took a step into the world. And roared the name of what it desired;" STARRRRRRRRS!!"

Raccoon City’s Downfall 2

Anybody who witnessed that event would think, that it was hell. The city was overflowing with the dead. They were starving. They preyed on the living. They envied the living. That is why they chew on the flesh of those still living, and convert them to the same fate. Gangs of cannibal-dead paraded around the city.

A car flipped on its side was engulfed in flames. A charred body crawled out from inside, and stood up to quench its thirst with the blood of the living. There were sounds of gunshots in the distance. There were people yelling and screaming. A police car races through the streets. It hardly looks like they are trying to help anyone. A house is burning. A nice little French restaurant. The restaurant was engulfed in flames and the neighbors were next to fall prey to the fire. No firefighters will come to the scene. No spectators will gather either. The house just burns. A city transformed into hell.

This is Raccoon City. An industrial city in the Mid-West of America with a population of about 100,000. The city was developed by the Umbrella Corporation. They built all the factories in the city, and the Umbrella Corporation in some way employed 30% of the residents.

If not for the virus leak, it was quite a peaceful city. But the Umbrella Corporation had designed the city for extreme emergencies. Extreme emergency meaning when there is a biohazard. There are only two freeways that lead out of the city. To get to the freeway in the North, you must drive through the property of Umbrella Corporation's factories. Ordinarily it was not treated as private property, but it could be easily blockaded. A mobile wall had just been positioned to block the entire road. In the early morning,

residents were directed to evacuate the city from this road, but as soon as security detected people who were infected with the virus, they shut-off access.

The Western freeway faced the Arklay mountain range and was connected by a bridge that extended off a sharp cliff. No resident was aware of the fact that this bridge was actually a drawbridge, and with a flip of the switch the middle would split making it impassable. That is exactly what had happened. Since the biohazard outbreak, the city has been in lock-down. Umbrella had sent in their private security force, the UBCS, to maintain order within the city. However, this was merely a formality, as nobody believed that a force of several dozen security personnel could manage this situation. The number of zombies multiplied exponentially. Those remaining in Raccoon City were left with only one choice. To be killed and resurrected as the living dead. But, even in this hopeless situation, there were some who did not give up. Jill Valentine was one of them. She secretly came to Raccoon City in order to investigate the evils of the Umbrella Corporation.

Jill, together with Chris, attempted to warn the public about Umbrella Corp's virus leaks and dehumanizing experiments. But the information she had, lacked concrete evidence for the media to take them seriously. Having a reputation as conspiracy-nuts was tolerable, but as a result of their persistence, the police issued search warrants against them as prime suspects of several incidents including the explosion at the mansion. It was an easy move for Umbrella Corp, who had the city police on their payroll.

Chris was collecting evidence at the European branches of Umbrella Corp. Jill secretly remained in Raccoon City to dig up more information on Umbrella Corp. It was during this time that the chaos began. From early in the morning, emergency warnings were sent from the radio, television, and loudspeakers mounted on emergency vehicles, telling all residents to evacuate immediately. At that point the situation was relatively calm. Umbrella Corp already knew that the virus had leaked into Raccoon City, and that zombie attacks had been reported. Of course, none of that information was made public. Unsuspectingly, the residents began to evacuate. Just two hours after the evacuation began, infected evacuees were discovered. The government sent in the army and Raccoon City was completely closed off. Now, all that remains in the city are dead

bodies and the forsaken. They will probably both be disposed of and eliminated from history.

Jill was trying to somehow escape from the city. But she was in a hopeless situation. With her back against the wall, she had run into a blind alley. She had used up almost all of her bullets. The only other weapon she had was a knife that she had just killed five zombies with, but there were at least 50 zombies gathering at the entrance of the alley. Once they bite you, you are infected. Even to Jill, it seemed impossible to escape uninfected with these 50 or so zombies advancing toward her. It seemed that all she could do was pray, but Jill would not pray. If a miracle were to happen, she had to make it happen with all that she had left in her. She loaded the last cartridge into the gun. With precision, she terminated a zombie with each bullet.

She was finally down to her last shot. Jill looked for a zombie worthy of the last bullet, but the dead all looked the same. She blasted the forehead of the zombie right in front of her. She was out of ammo. Jill pulls out her knife, as the zombies marched toward her. With all the strength she could muster, Jill kicked them to the ground, slit their throats, and broke their necks. Then a miracle happened. God must have been listening to her. There were sounds of gunshots. The zombie approaching her fell to the ground. Then the next zombie fell, and the one after that. The precision was even more impressive than Jill's. Each shot pierced through a zombie's head. The zombies continued to hit the asphalt. There were only a few left standing. In small numbers, they were no match for Jill. While they clumsily moved toward her, she tore their necks to deliver them their second death. In no time the mob of zombies were no more. A young man in army uniform appeared with his assault rifle.

"Are you alright?" he asked.

"Yeah thanks. You have a good aim," Jill complimented.

"You're no amateur either. Most people wouldn't even think about fighting those monsters."

"Even housewives could do what I did."

"Well if you're an ordinary housewife then that makes me a boy scout."

"I'm Jill Valentine. I'm a member of S.T.A.R.S." She stuck her hand out.

"Wow, you're from S.T.A.R.S., that the elite unit of the police force? But I heard that you guys were wiped out."

"I am a survivor. And who are you?"

"I'm Corporal Carlos Oliveira from the U.B.C.S."

"What's the U.B.C.S.?"

"Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service. We're Umbrella's special forces unit to counter biohazard outbreaks."

"So you work for Umbrella..." Jill took a step back.

"Yup. We came on a rescue mission to find survivors like you. But, since we all got split apart during the chaos of panicking people and the zombie mobs, I'm not sure we're really helping."

"Helping? Us?" Jill laughed scornfully. Carlos confidently responded, "I'm good with my gun. Don't worry, I'll keep you safe."

"That's not the problem," Jill protested. And glared straight at him.

"The reason we're in this mess is because of Umbrella!"

"Whoa whoa, calm down. Look, I'm a mercenary and I just get paid to deal with situations like this."

Jill continued to glare straight into his eyes. Then she relaxed and said,

"Alright. I'll believe you."

"Great. Now that you believe me do you want to move together? It'll be safer than being alone. Here."

Carlos tossed his AK47 he had slung on his back to Jill. Jill grabbed the assault rifle and cocked it with ease.

"It seems like you're the one that needs company," Jill remarked.

"Maybe so. Anyways, a rescue chopper will be arriving to the police station. It'll take some time to prepare for take-off, but we should head there in advance. Come with me."

Carlos looked at Jill and sensed that she was annoyed. He added, "please."

"Alright."

Jill nodded in agreement and let out a laugh. In that moment the ground suddenly trembled. Was it an earthquake? As Jill braced herself, the ground began to violently shake. Carlos crouched down.

"It’s not an earthquake", Jill exclaimed.

"Look, the trees by the road aren't moving. The telephone lines are still too. It's only shaking where we're standing. Be careful."

Right as Jill finished her warning, the ground split open and its head popped out. It was a monstrous worm-like creature. It had a huge head, and its enormous body was the size of a train coach. The researchers at Umbrella Corp called it the Grave Digger. Each section of muscle stretched and contracted like an accordion, and released a yellowish viscous liquid. The opening at the top of its head---perhaps a mouth---was surrounded with four razor-sharp fangs. Deep inside the opening, there were countless thorn-like protrusions facing inward to prevent anything the Grave Digger bites onto from escaping.

It was making the sound of mud being squeezed through the hand. A brown substance oozed out of the opening. The opening expanded widely and the four fangs faced outward. With the viscous fluid gushing out, it came straight at the two. Jill and Carlos jumped out of the way. As the momentum of the Grave Digger carried it straight passed both of them, they shot the beast full of 5.45mm bullets from both sides. The Grave

Digger's body was adapted to penetrate through rock and was unbelievably hard. The bullets made scratches but nowhere close to critically damaging the monster worm. The Gravedigger lunged passed them and tore through the asphalt road, disappearing underground in a matter of seconds.

"...wow. What the hell was that?!!" Carlos peered into the hole where the Grave Digger disappeared. The ground began to tremble again.

"It's coming!" Jill yelled.

The four fangs thrust out of the ground right beneath Jill. Jill saw the mouth wide-open and spread her legs so that her toes were just able to cling onto the sides. Luckily she was not eaten, but she was flung into the air. Jill regained balance in the air and as she landed on her feet she fired back at the Grave Digger. But, the bullets just seem to bounce off its body.

"Jill! You need to shoot inside it!"

Jill quickly understood what Carlos said, and ran away from the beast to gain some distance. Then she waved her hands in the air and shouted,

"Here's your lunch. Come and get it!"

Whether or not the Grave Digger heard Jill, it was heading straight for her like a rocket. It shut its mouth and aimed its fangs at Jill. Her plan was to provoke it and shoot into its open mouth, But with the mouth closed she had no shot. The bullets hit around the mouth and merely scratched some skin off. It was a failed attempt. The Grave Digger was aware of its weaknesses. That was the only explanation for how it attacked. Jill dodged the monster worm that came thrusting toward her and rolled to her side. The Grave Digger returned underground and disappeared instantly.

Jill said to Carlos, "Looks like one of us is going to have to be the bait."

"Bait?"

"...alright. You don't look appetizing anyway. Hey, do you have any grenades?"

"Yeah, a few American ones."

"Good. I'm counting on you."

The ground began to tremble again. The two braced themselves. The Grave Digger's head popped out right next to Carlos. It knocked Carlos down with its head. The overgrown worm went straight for Carlos as he rolled on the ground. Just as it was about to thrust its long fangs at Carlos, Jill rolled in between and stuck her gun inside the Grave Digger's puckered mouth. She smiled as she pulled the trigger. At the rate of 600 bullets per minute, the bullets blasted into its mouth. The monster worm writhed in pain. Sludge-like body fluid gushed out and the beast finally opened its mouth.

"Now Carlos!" Jill directed.

Carlos was already in motion, and threw the grenade into the open mouth. They both took cover as quickly as they could. Together with a subdued explosion, yellow and brown body fluids splattered everywhere, along with pieces of freak worm flesh and shell. Regardless of how hard the shell was, it made little difference to an explosion from the inside. The smell of the blood and flesh must have attracted the zombies, as they began to amass from all around the area.

"Let’s go," Jill commanded as she pulled Carlos' arm.

"Where?"

"Underground."

They knocked the zombies out of their way, cutting them with their knives, blowing them up with their shotguns, and blasting their heads with their handguns, as they made their escape.

Wesker 8

Wesker was sitting in his chair surrounded by all sorts of devices. It was a small room. No, it was not even a room. This was a car. Formerly an Umbrella Corporation monitoring vehicle. In front of him were twelve monitors big and small, projecting scenes from 58 surveillance cameras around Raccoon City.

However, Wesker was not looking at these. He was resting against the back rest with his eyes closed. His eyes were moving behind his eyelids as if he was looking at something moving. As if he was watching a dream.

He was synchronizing. Out of the various changes that Wesker experienced from the virus, this ability was the most unexpected. He was able to synchronize with all organisms affected by the t-Virus and t-Virus mutations. He gained the ability to co-experience what all infected creatures perceived. He was even able to understand and control their perception.

Just like a centipede never has trouble controlling all of its legs, Wesker never drowned in the flood of perceptual information transmitted from all the infected creatures. And as if having a conversation with a friend in a noisy crowd, he naturally honed in to the most necessary information while the rest became noise. Although depending on the organism, there was a difference in quality of synchronization. For instance, usually infected insects were drained of most of their perceptual ability and he only received a blurred image. He was only able to get a clear perception and in certain circumstances trade information with Tyrants.

Wesker was looking at Raccoon City. Looking through the eyes of one of the Tyrants. Its name was Nemesis. Umbrella Corporation's ultimate stalker. You could say it was like a robot programmed by Umbrella Corporation to faithfully follow orders. Wesker was able to connect directly into its consciousness. He shared the innate deep craving that Nemesis felt.

That is why he understood that this craving was a form of love. The name engraved in the stalker was S.T.A.R.S. The surviving members were its targets. It would hunt them down and kill them. Already, Nemesis had found one of them, pursued and finished him off. Of course Wesker knew who it was.

Brad Vickers, an Alpha Team member of S.T.A.R.S. He was a cowardly man unfit for STARS. He was able to survive this far because of his cowardice but he could not escape the hands of his stalker. Wesker enjoyed the same ecstasy Nemesis felt as it killed Brad. Just like a martyr dreams of going to heaven, Nemesis dreamed of slaughtering his target.

There were few that still stayed alive. Nemesis had reawakened in pursuit of this ecstasy. Wesker followed the golden stream of consciousness passing through the soul and submerged into Nemesis's mind.

----Nemesis.

Wesker spoke.

----The ultimate stalker.

When he spoke his voice penetrated Nemesis's mind and morphed into thoughts. Then Nemesis's own thoughts began to move around like a periscope looking for its master. It pointed directly at Wesker. Wesker was being gazed at. He felt it through the void.

----Nemesis, listen carefully. I am your God, the God of Gods.

God? An image of some superior existence that gives orders emerged into Nemesis's mind. That image became almost identical to that of God. Tyrants listen to human orders because they were designed to be controlled by someone. And the only one who can control Nemesis was "God." The code "God" engraved into Nemesis and Wesker's existence merged into one.

Wesker slipped into Nemesis's mind and used the "control system" to assume the position of God within him. Wesker was now able to control Nemesis as he pleased. Wesker was confident of this. But he was not interested in controlling Nemesis at the moment. He just wanted to make the preparations so he could control Nemesis. Nemesis awoke. The scientists had just put on special protective gear onto him. It was to not only protect Nemesis from attacks, but also included a safety system to prevent Nemesis from becoming uncontrollable due to a virus malfunction. Nemesis also had a small camera embedded in him. Through this camera, Umbrella Headquarters would be

able to collect information. Nemesis was about to leave the laboratory escorted by Umbrella personnel. "Nemesis, listen to me." Wesker gently whispered to Nemesis. "I am your God and God of everything. I am watching everything move you make. Nothing can escape God's eyes."

Nemesis answered with a growl. "Good. First, you must obey my orders. That is your mission." In response to Wesker's words, Nemesis's thoughts solidified and were transmitted to Wesker. The amorphous response was unmistakably an affirmation. Wesker saw it clearly. Affirmative. That was what Nemesis was saying. "If you find the target alert me. I want to see you in battle." Another affirmation. Wesker slowly opened his eyes. And he looked at the monitor in front of him. It was a picture of hell.

Raccoon City’s Downfall 3

Jill told Carlos what had happened in the mansion. It was the same story she had told the press and on TV several times. Kind of strange that Carlos had not known anything about this. It wasn’t difficult for her to retell everything in the correct and logical order so that he could follow everything.

“And you are one of them…” Jill said.

“Dogs, working for Umbrella. Is that what you wanted to say?” he interrupted her.

“Something like that” the Alpha Team member replied.

“If you say so. Anyway, I had no idea about what Umbrella is involved in. I’m simply a mercenary, that’s all”, he assured.

Jill gave Carlos a piercing glare and he was doing the same in return. His expression seemed open and honest. If this was an act, then he was a damn good actor.

“The world needs to know the whole truth.”

“Okay, and for that to work you have to make it out of here alive…”

“Let’s go this way” Jill said and went down a set of stairs leading towards the subway station, Carlos was following her.

The station was empty, apart from zombies roaming around. They slaughtered their way through them, again, and made their way forward. Only a part of the station was still lit. They climbed down on the rails and went into the next tunnel. It was very dark and both had the feeling of walking through hell for real. After a while they were surrounded by pitch black darkness. They had flashlights attached to the barrels of their AK-47s. When their lights found one of the zombies, they started firing in its direction. Shots could be heard, again and again.

“Hey, did you hear that?” Carlos asked.

The loud shots still echoed inside their heads.

“Well, not…” … really, that’s what Jill wanted to say, but then she also heard a voice in the distance. It sounded a bit like a howling animal and a bit like a screaming human.

“Is someone fighting some zombies?”

“Possible, or some new enemy is waiting for us.”

The voice came closer and they could hear the screaming better and better.

“STAAAAAARS!!”

It was clearly audible and they both looked at each other.

“Hm, seems to be your friend”, Carlos teased her.

They pointed their flashlights in the direction the voice came from. Both light beams hit a human-like figure. It was wearing a long, black coat and came towards them with big steps.

“Who are you?” Jill called.

The figure didn’t answer and continued walking.

“Are you looking for S.T.A.R.S.?”

No answer. Instead, the figure began to walk faster. And now, once it came closer, Jill realized what kind of giant was standing in front of her. It was over two meters tall – it wasn't human and no ordinary zombie either. The figure reminded her a lot of the Tyrant she saw at the mansion.

"STAAAAAARS", the figure screamed again. Its facial features were now clearly visible. The bald head was covered in a shiny, melted-looking skin. Empty white eyes were staring straightforward, without irises or pupils. Nose and lips were also missing and its fangs were exposed in its mouth. On its hip it was carrying a machine gun, one Jill had never seen before.

"Run!" Carlos screamed but Jill was already running. Shots were fired. Full-automatic fire hammered down on them.

"This way!!" Jill called and, with all her strength, opened a small door next to the rails. Jill rushed inside, Carlos right behind her – door shut!

The monster was left in the tunnel. They could hear scratches behind them, sparks emitted. They were attacked by a spider and it was the size of a dog. Apparently it was lying in ambush for them. It was moving across the wall with an incredible speed. Its movements were tricky and smart, but that was no real problem for Jill and Carlos. Its belly got riddled with bullets and it stopped immediately. Disgusting ichor was splashing from the spider's body.

"Seems like things went from bad to worse", Carlos said.

"I prefer this over the monster waiting behind this door", Jill replied.

"You're right. What was that thing anyway?"

"If only I knew."

"Well, it seemed to me like it was after you."

"I told you, I don't know what it is!"

"It was screaming "Stars" the whole time."

“You’re a pain.”

“Must be bad if something like this is always after you. You’d better be careful about who you get involved with. Stalkers need to be taken seriously.”

“Can you stop this bullshit already –“Jill was holding her breath. She was looking towards an opening of an air duct near the ceiling and saw something moving behind the grate. It was pink-colored and its paw was lying against the grate from the inside. Fingers with long claws were holding the grate tightly, shaking it. The grate gave in, eventually, and was thrown to the ground with a loud metallic bang. The thing was then moving its face out of the air duct.

The head looked like a rotten peach with a big, wide-opened mouth. And out of this mouth was coming a long, thin tongue, just like a tentacle.

“What… is that?”

Next to the face a hand appeared and grabbed the edge of the air duct. And then that thing’s pink-colored body fully left the air duct. It fell towards the ground, as if it had been freshly hatched. It then lifted itself up with its four limbs and started to crawl like a spider, dragging the long tongue across the floor. Another one of those things appeared at the end of the air duct. And now Carlos and Jill finally realized that they weren’t just passive spectators. With frantic moving legs, that thing began to sprint in their direction. Carlos and Jill started firing at it and it reacted faster than both of them had expected. It escaped the bullets and moved towards the wall, quickly running upwards like a lizard.

However, Jill and Carlos were both professionals and it didn’t take them long to figure out that strange thing’s evasion pattern. They focused on its head, because there had to be a weak spot somewhere! But even when its head was teared to shreds, the thing stayed on the wall. Now the second one “hatched” from the air duct. A third and fourth one came next. Those monsters were dropping like water from the edge of the air duct.

Carlos and Jill continued to concentrate their firing at those things’ heads. Within seconds they turned into a big pile of dead bodies. However, more and more came

climbing over the corpses of their fellow species towards Carlos and Jill. The monsters didn't seem to fear death. When a bullet hit one of their heads, the others just continued to move forwards. Then one of the things managed to grab Jill's wrist with its tongue. Jill reacted quickly, grabbing her knife and cutting the tongue off of her. The monster's head was now directly in front of her. The AK-47's barrel was way too long to properly shoot from this distance. When the thing continued to grab Jill with its tongue and tried to bite her, she hit its temple with her fist. Its jaw closed with a smacking sound. With one hit, Jill managed to separate its head from its body. The next one was already on its way.

"Licker". Jill grabbed its tongue and pulled the monster close to her, then grabbed its head and broke its neck. Carlos attacked them with his knife as if he wanted to slice them into cold cuts. Every time one of those things closed in on Jill, she hit its face and then rammed her knife into its mouth to cut through the cervical. Jill's knife became slick with the monsters' body fluids after a while – so she started to grab their chins and simply tore them apart. It was a mass slaughter.

At some point, Jill had lost track of how many Lickers she had killed. She was breathing noticeably harder now and she was looking for the next beast. But it was quiet. She could only hear her own breathing. She then looked at Carlos and their eyes met.

"Was that it?" Carlos asked.

"Yes. It seems like that was finally it." Jill let out a sigh of relief. However, in that moment, she could hear the familiar "S.T.A.R.S." scream far in the distance. "Shit! I guess we can't get rid of that guy so quickly…"

Staying here would be pointless, so they took the only hallway that led away from this place, without the necessity to return back to the subway tunnel.

While on their way, they reached a bifurcation.

"Right or left?"

Carlos decided to go right. This hallway soon ended at a door. Carlos turned the doorknob, the door wasn't locked. They were now standing in an engine room with many big machines. Carlos crouched down in front of the door they just used and attached something to the doorknob with a wire.

A booby trap, Jill thought. If the door were to be opened, the grenade's safety pin would be removed and it would fall to the ground. That probably wasn't enough to stop their pursuer, if he was coming for them, but it would stop him for a moment. At least Carlos was convinced of that.

There was a ladder in one corner of the room. Jill and Carlos used it to get into another hallway which branched out even further. There were stairs and ladders here and there, leading either downwards or upwards – it resembled a little maze. They could hear a dull detonation in the distance.

"The booby trap was activated" Jill said and threw a grenade towards a bunch of huge spiders that were just coming at her.

"What are you saying?!" Carlos shouted. All the shooting and detonations were so loud that he had trouble understanding what Jill said.

"Oh right, the trap. But even if it worked, I don't think we fatally wounded him with that."

"Yeah, probably. We better hurry."

Within the tunnels they at least had some sort of orientation for where they were, however, ever since they had entered this maze, their sense of direction was acting up. Their only option left was to go into that direction of which they thought would eventually lead them to the surface.

"Here, this way" Carlos said with determination.

They were climbing another iron ladder for the umpteenth time.

"Look, we've really found the exit!"

Carlos was climbing through a manhole, with Jill close behind him, and then they were standing in the open. Next to them was a burning car, turned upside-down. It was so loud, it hurt their ears. Zombies came at them immediately. Jill and Carlos began to fight them – the police station wasn't far anymore.

"Well, we can thank my intuition for that!" Carlos bragged.

"What intuition?" Jill snapped back and gave him a perplexed look.

"I brought you to the police station, so stop complaining!"

"I wonder how someone can be so proud of such little intuition."

A group of dogs was coming closer, five animals in total.

"Looks like we've got company again."

"Aren't those doggies super cute?"

The skin of the pitch-black beasts was ripped to shreds, muscles and bones were clearly visible underneath.

"Yeah, if only they weren't so damn dead" Jill said.

All of a sudden the dogs leapt at Jill and Carlos – but those two were used to something like this by now, it wasn't a big problem to them. They stopped the monsters with their machine guns and took care of the rest with their knives or kicked and punched them from a close distance. The last one was finished by Jill as she broke its neck.

"I wouldn't let you take my dog for a walk, that's for sure" Carlos laughed.

Wesker 9

Nemesis was the ultimate stalker. Everything he saw and heard was captured by the camera and mic implanted into him, and sent to headquarters. The images sent from the

camera were automatically examined to detect, extract and analyze” 208 points are checked in order to find a match with the target, then he would be informed. He experienced this information as light. Once a target was identified, the smell and body temperature were detected and recorded. He would stalk the recorded smell and body temperature tirelessly. The light he experienced varied in intensity and direction. Of course, the light informed him the direction of his target, and the intensity indicated the proximity of his target.

Nemesis had found a light. The face has been identified and he knew the target's name. Jill Valentine. The glow inside the darkness. Nemesis stalked the light. Even if the target gained distance, he would not hurry and he would never give up. He saw the light.

Wesker, who shared the sensations that Nemesis had, knew what this meant. The target was close. Nemesis was extremely excited. Wesker was influenced and equally shared the excitement. Soon he would corner her and take her life with his hands. He was dreaming of it. He was a yearning for it. Jill was right there. He could feel it on his skin as he approached her. From the other side of the door, he could feel the rich sensation of his target.

Nemesis opened the door. Without warning, a grenade exploded right at his feet. The explosion blew metal fragments in every direction and Nemesis was blown away. He tumbled two or three times before he smashed into the wall. The metal pieces hailed onto Nemesis, penetrating his protective gear and digging into his body. Wesker also felt the impact. He was experiencing the pain. It was a violent pain. But, it was distant, like the pain in a dream.

Nemesis got back up. He was not critically damaged, but the metal pieces were still stuck in his body. The light had weakened a little bit. But the traces clearly indicated the target. Nemesis began his pursuit. Wesker shared the elation that Nemesis was experiencing. “STARRRRRRRRS!!” , roared Nemesis.

Wesker opened his eyes. He was feeling the excitement of closing in on the target mixed with intense pain. He typed in a search on the keyboard. The monitor projected

the tunnel that Nemesis had just seen. Nemesis began to walk. Wesker switched to the next surveillance camera. Finally, he located Jill and Carlos.

“Jill..... I'm looking forward to seeing how well you do against Nemesis” He switched screens again. Various views of Raccoon City popped up on the screen. Then the monitor projected an underground laboratory where the research for the G-cell that birthed Nemesis was conducted. This laboratory was also about to be abandoned because of a virus leakage.

It was here that another Tyrant was fighting. The T-103. Not as powerful as Nemesis, but it could be controlled with quite a bit of precision. Wesker focused his consciousness and submerged into the Tyrant. The Tyrant had captured a woman. A beautiful Asian with silky jet-black hair that defined her handsome face. Ada Wong.

Wesker knew that name. In fact, he not only knew her name, but she worked under his orders. Traitor. Wesker 's feelings merged with the Tyrants feelings and transformed into tenacious anger. Ada shot multiple rounds into the Tyrant. The pain. It was nothing unbearable but quite irritating. The Tyrant ran up to her and grabbed her by the neck.

“Ada!” someone shouted. He was the reason she betrayed Wesker. The cause of her disobedient actions. It was a young cop who shouted, and Wesker knew his name too. Leon S. Kennedy. He was a new police officer that had been stationed to Raccoon City Police Department today. But why did Ada fall for this guy, of all people..... Wesker expressed his agitation inside the Tyrant's consciousness. He was consumed in his thoughts, he felt a sudden blow right in his face as if he were hit by a hammer.

Ada shot the Tyrant's face from point-blank. The Tyrant was unable to endure the blast and threw Ada. She smashed straight into the wall like a ball, as the Tyrant lost balance and fell into the incineration pool below. Wesker barely escaped out of the Tyrant as its body was instantly reduced to ashes in the thousand-degree flames. Wesker woke from the nightmare. He had never experienced it, but if the object of his consciousness died, Wesker would undoubtedly be affected too.

Wesker opened his eyes. He looked at the monitor. He saw Ada held by Leon confessing classified information that she should not have disclosed. Not only that, she

is trying to help him escape with this top-secret information. Why are ‘humans’ so foolish? Wesker sighed in dismay. Compared to them, Tyrants are so much better made. Wesker refocused his consciousness back to Nemesis.

Raccoon City’s Downfall 4

Jill and Carlos had made it to the Police Department. The big entrance hall was eerie quiet and empty.

“Everyone has left” Jill said.

“Despite the dead you mean” Carlos replied.

Zombies, on their hunt for prey, started to appear. Many of them were wearing police uniforms – a painful sight for Jill. She secretly started looking out for the face of a colleague, although she knew she couldn’t help anymore.

“We need a radio!” Carlos shouted and began firing.

“This way!” Jill answered and opened a door.

She pointed towards the end of the room, which was filled with desks full of files and documents. Both entered the room and closed the door behind them. Carlos approached the radio and Jill blocked the door with desks and chairs. Between Carlos and the radio there were some zombies lying on the ground, chewing on the flesh of one unlucky victim.

“I hate disrupting dinner but it can’t be helped today” he dryly said and quickly shot each of them in the head with precision. After he was done, he sat down in front of the radio and started operating it. They could hear loud noises coming from behind the door. Zombies, on their search for food, were rattling the door handle and tried to get into the room. It didn’t take long for the first few chairs to give in. Jill grabbed her

shotgun and got ready. Carlos spoke up all of a sudden. He seemed to have caught something.

“What?! What is that supposed to mean?!”

He continued with a grim voice. “That can’t be true… All the civilians who are still in the city… Why were we sent on this mission in the first place then? Was it planned from the beginning that we should die here? … Okay, I understand. There’s no use in blaming you now… There’s a heliport at the Police Department’s roof. Meet us there. Please… Yes, we will be on time.”

Carlos stood up and looked at Jill, his face pale as a wall.

“What’s wrong?”

“We’re in deep shit. They want to drop a new type of bomb on Raccoon City at dawn.”

“What does that mean?”

“What I just said. They want to eradicate Raccoon City.”

“But there are still many civilians left.”

“I know. Many of my comrades, too. But…”

“They want to get rid of all the evidence!” Jill looked at her watch. “When is the sun rising?”

“Around six. If they take off at six it will probably take them about 20 minutes from the nearest base. We don’t have much time left.”

“Then we should get going.”

The barricade was now almost completely destroyed and the door opened forcefully. The living dead flooded into the room and shots could be heard. Carlos and Jill were good shooters and didn’t waste much ammo. Bullet after bullet went into the zombies’ heads and they were killed for good. The pile of bodies got bigger and new zombies started crawling over it. Whoever had the toughest nerves would win this battle

eventually. There seemed to be no end to them. The zombies moved slowly, heavy, their senses were gone. What made them dangerous, however, was their endurance and persistence. Whoever gave up or lost their courage had lost and got eaten eventually. Finally, after a while, there were no more zombies. Jill and Carlos climbed over the pile of dead bodies and left the room.

“This way!” Jill led Carlos upstairs.

They reached a hallway and found a strange creature waiting for them. The creature’s body was covered in scales and it sort of resembled a frog. However, it was almost as big as a man who was sitting on the ground. Of course, this creature – code-named “Hunter” – was also part of the Umbrella Corporation’s bio organic weapon arsenal. The Hunter’s body was protected by a tough armour made of scales, and its sharp claws could easily rip open a person’s stomach. Jill had already encountered them in the mansion and nearly had the tip of her nose cut off by one of them.

The Hunter jumped towards Jill, sharp claws pointed forward. The Alpha Team member ducked. However, she didn’t have the time to ready her weapon – but Carlos did. He fired a full burst out of his AK-47 into the Hunter’s side. The sound of the separate bullets created one big rata plan. He concentrated the bullets on the Hunter’s flank, scales flew off and holes got ripped into its skin. Bodily fluid splattered around. The Hunter was pushed to the side. Jill stopped its moving body with her foot, pressed the barrel of her gun directly on its stomach – because that was, as she remembered, its weak spot – and then she fired, without mercy.

However, there were two more Hunters in this room. One moved towards Carlos, the other one towards Jill. Hunters were nasty enemies and, by all means, not something anyone would want to face all alone without backup. And they were moving with an incredible speed, an ability that seemed far too unreal in regard to their massive bodies. The Hunters jumped and swung their claws at Carlos and Jill. The first Hunter ripped holes in Carlos’ uniform, the other one bumped into Jill and pushed her against a wall. But they were professionals and wouldn’t go down that easily. Their enemies weren’t human but that didn’t stop them from studying their behaviour and looking out for their

weak spots. Less than one ammo clip later, both Hunters were lying dead on the floor with their stomachs torn apart.

“I’m wondering what our government has to say about all this” Jill complained.

“Well, I guess poor, little underlings like us will never find out” Carlos replied.

“Destroying a whole city and killing all its civilians… no matter what happened here, this can’t be justified. Never. It’s unbelievable.”

“Well, at any rate, that means that this is very serious. Umbrella has control behind the scenes. You’re probably right with your story: There has to be something they want to keep a secret, something they intend to cover up at all costs. Even if it means to eradicate a whole city.”

“Something they want to keep a secret? Hm, I think they have more than enough of that.”

“I have no idea about what it could be – and I don’t care. I don’t even want money for this mission. The only thing I want is to finally get out of this damn city.”

Carlos had grown up in a city full of violence. He was the third youngest of seven brothers, but when he was born his two eldest brothers had already been killed during fights between gangs. On one morning, when he was five years old, a group of six armed teenagers ambushed his family at home. They had to line up at a wall. It was early in the morning and Pedro, the third oldest of the brothers, had not yet returned from his late-night activities. The teenagers said they wanted revenge for a member of their gang who Pedro had shot. So they shot Tonio, the fourth oldest, in the head, just like that – and then, they disappeared. Such stories happened daily in this city.

When Carlos was seven, he held a shotgun for the first time, attempting to be a thief. It seemed like a miracle that he didn’t shoot anyone back then. At age ten he raided a farm and got caught by paramilitaries. They would have killed him for sure if a guerilla troop hadn’t rescued him last minute. Carlos, who didn’t know any better, thought that the communist guerillas were the only ones who could help the poor. From then on Carlos was trained under the revolutionary guerilla troops. He learned how to handle weapons,

how to kill humans and several survival techniques. He grew up to be an elite guerilla fighter.

When the government troops started their large-scale attack to put an end to the guerilla (guerillas) for good, Carlos was one of those who fiercely fought until the end. However, the government's soldiers and weapons were far too strong and in the end, all guerilla fighters were destroyed completely. Because he had been one of the leading figures, Carlos' capture was then known around the world. That's when Umbrella took notice of him and recruited him, so that he, the good and loyal fighter, could coordinate the corporation's mercenaries.

Carlos liked Raccoon City. Here he found peace at least, peace he had so long longed for. He believed that the USA was truly a country of freedom. However, that was all over now. Now all he wanted was to escape this city. Escape this city — because he wanted to live, not to die.

Jill could feel a detonation. She could feel the ground shaking under her feet, the ceiling in front of her came down. Amidst the dust and smoke, she could see a monster with a long coat.

"STAAAAAARS!"

It was Nemesis. Jill started firing at the monster immediately, but the 5.45 mm projectiles seemed to have no effect on that thing. It was like throwing pebbles at it.

"I don't think we can kill it with bullets", Carlos said.

"We have to get some distance between us and that thing! I can't use a grenade while I'm so close to it!" Jill shouted.

Nemesis was carrying his truly intimidating machine gun on his hip. Six rotating barrels, a drum type magazine with several hundred rounds and a rocket launcher. A monstrous weapon for a monstrous being.

"Run!" Carlos yelled and they both started running.

They made their way through a tight hallway, without a chance to take cover in sight. Then they spotted a door and both, with full force, crashed into a room at the same time. At the same time, Nemesis' machine gun started to make a terrifying sound. Sparks flew around, concrete walls were destroyed and cracked like Christmas cookies. Carlos removed the flashlight from his rifle and attached a grenade launcher. Everything happened within seconds. It was clear that he had not learned his skills during training but during actual fights on the frontline.

The machine gun went quiet. At that moment, Carlos ducked, ran into the hallway and fired a grenade. The mercenary had no time to check how effective his grenade was. However, before he made his way back into the room, he checked whether he had hit his mark or not. He had. The 40 mm grenade flew directly into Nemesis' stomach. There was no time to close the door, and Carlos and Jill took cover, holding their heads low. A thud could be heard, and it made their insides tremble. A heatwave moved through the hallway and the blast blew a huge amount of dust into the room.

"Now!" Jill called and rushed outside without caring about the thick dust clouds.

Carlos was right behind her. They quickly glanced to where Nemesis had been, then they ran into the opposite direction. Nemesis was kneeling behind a wall of dust. He wasn't dead, but it was obvious that he was severely wounded. Jill and Carlos ran towards the end of the hallway and up a set of stairs. All zombies who got in their way were either kicked or stabbed without hesitation. They made their way upwards, towards the roof.

"I don't think we killed that thing" Jill breathed heavily.

"If he comes back, he just gets another one of these" Carlos said and gently patted his grenade launcher.

Both had reached the end of the stairs and were now standing in front of a heavy steel door. It was secured with a simple padlock, and Jill removed it with a single shot. They stepped outside, onto the roof. There was a small heliport, but it was empty. No sign of the promised transport helicopter – and there was almost no time left until dawn.

Wesker 10

He was trembling with anger. His intense emotion was about to rip his body apart, but he was able to control it because of the extreme pain he was also feeling. Wesker shuddered inside of Nemesis. The pain from the grenade that had exploded near his stomach remained in his body. By enduring that, he was also able to endure the anger that was boiling in his mind.

Kill. Kill them. His mind was filled with the desire to kill. Kill those inferior monkeys. Make them suffer so much that they will regret ever being alive. Then finish them off. Nemesis was stalking them, following the traces of light.

Wesker's anger was transforming the body of Nemesis. The monitor on Nemesis's protective gear detected the physiological changes and released a large dose of tranquilizer into his blood stream, enough to knock out an elephant. But, even that would not stop Wesker's anger. His constant pace of walking and attitude showed no difference. But, a major physical transformation triggered by the anger was taking place.

Wesker sent the zombies in order to slow Jill and Carlos down. But his control over the zombies was not anything like the precision he had over Nemesis. He just directed them towards their prey. Of course, he didn't expect the zombies to kill them. That is why he sent in the monsters, they were the killers. He had no intention of allowing the zombies to finish them off. With my hands, Wesker thought to himself. With my hands, Nemesis thought to himself. I will kill them. At that point there was already no distinction between Wesker and Nemesis. When he imagined the feeling of killing them, it was no longer distinguishable whether Wesker or Nemesis had experienced the deep, tingling ecstasy.

The pursuit continued. From the dead-end of the corridor to the stairs. Up and up the stairs.

Raccoon City’s Downfall 5

Carlos was crouching on the roof and, with squinted eyes, aimed at the door at the end of the hallway. Jill was waiting a few steps ahead, also with her gun ready. To her, waiting felt even worse than getting continuously attacked. However, both, Jill and Carlos, were outstanding soldiers. Not letting go of their focus, they waited for the moment the door would open. They didn’t have to wait long.

With a dull bang, the steel door was removed from its hinges – and then Nemesis appeared. His protective armour was visibly damaged and had several holes in it. A muffled bang could be heard when Carlos shot another grenade with his launcher. The grenade was fired directly at Nemesis, but the monster surprisingly managed to catch the grenade midair. However, before it could re-direct it, Jill had already aimed and fired at its hand with her shotgun. Nemesis was distracted for a brief moment, and then the RDX plastic explosive inside the grenade detonated. More than 300 metal pieces scattered around the area within seconds. It was clearly too much for Nemesis’ unprotected hand. Below the elbow, the arm was ripped to shreds and Nemesis pressed both legs hard to the ground to not lose his balance from the blast.

A second grenade came flying towards Nemesis, and then his machine gun started firing. The Grenade exploded while it was still in the air. However, its metal splinters poured down on Nemesis like rain. He turned his face away, but at the exact same moment, Jill began firing directly at it. The monster dropped the weapon, and it almost looked like he wanted to surrender. But then, all of a sudden, Nemesis started running. It ran directly towards Carlos, who was busy with reloading his grenade launcher. The mercenary was surprised by the attack and when he finally had his launcher ready, Nemesis was standing in front of him. It only took a quick swipe with his arm to remove the gun from Carlos’ hands. Carlos looked like a little boy compared to the tall Nemesis. But he didn’t have any choice and – without protection of any kind – attacked Nemesis. The monster grabbed his arm and threw him through the air without much effort. This sheer power twisted his elbow joint around and then he hit the concrete

roof, just like a doll. He stayed like this, the pain prevented him from moving. The only indicator, that he was still alive, was a soft groan.

As soon as Carlos' body was thrown away, Jill had started firing. Next to her, empty shell casings were piling up. Every bullet has hit its mark, but that didn't seem to bother Nemesis, and he charged towards Jill. She started to wonder how someone could finish off a monster that couldn't even be stopped by full-automatic fire. However, Jill didn't even try to dodge. She threw away her machine gun, grabbed her pistol and jumped towards Nemesis. Jill managed to slide underneath Nemesis' arm when he tried to grab her. She put the gun's muzzle where she thought his kidney was and then she fired. A fist came down, trying to crush her face, but she managed to escape. She then aimed for the bottom of Nemesis' chin and fired again. Jill used her gun for close-quarter-combat, just like a knife. One bullet went through one of the holes the grenade had ripped into his protective coat. Now, that seemed to do some damage – the bullets damaged Nemesis' muscles and inner organs.

"Jill, move!" Carlos called.

Not understanding what was going on, Jill let go of Nemesis and ran for her life. Just seconds later, a grenade exploded in the monster's back. He fell forward and landed on his stomach. Jill and Carlos wondered if this was the end. Nemesis' body was shaking, he was having heavy seizures. His protective clothes were now almost completely destroyed, his upper body was almost naked. There was a big, burned hole in his back, and his spine must have taken damage. Even if he was still alive, he would have no power left to fight. That's what Jill and Carlos thought, at least.

It started at the right arm's stump, exactly where his lower arm and hand had been ripped off. New flesh started to grow from the wound, just like sprouts from a plant. Those sprouts were looping, around and into each other, like vines of a climbing plant. This bundle eventually created a new arm. Even the hole in Nemesis' back started to close up quickly. However, that was not all that was recreated on Nemesis' body. Skin was cracking open all over his body and the muscles underneath started to swell, just like a balloon. The muscles were growing with an incredible speed and shortly after that, Nemesis' body had changed significantly. Fleshy tentacles and branches were

coming out of his body. As if they were living beings on their own, they covered his body, hit the ground and were moving around.

This creature, which had now lost all similarities to any human being, started to stand up slowly.

“I can’t believe it!” shouted Carlos, holding his dislocated arm.

“STAAAAAARS!!” the resurrected Nemesis screamed towards the sky. His tentacles were moving around like a nest full of snakes.

With enough pressure, Carlos set his arm back into place, cold sweat was running down his chin. He had almost yelled out in pain but could control himself last minute. He could move his fingers – it hurt, but at least he could move them. Better than nothing.

At the same moment, Jill noticed some metal barrels standing in one corner of the roof. According to the labels, those barrels contained a flammable organic solvent, which was used for re-painting the RPD’s walls. Jill ran towards the barrels, there were three in total. It had to be enough. Jill readied her AK-47 and started firing and the re-awakened Nemesis. If he returned fire now, everything would be over. However, Jill figured he wouldn’t do that. Nemesis had dropped his machine gun earlier, because he didn’t want this to be over too soon. That’s what Jill thought. He wants to make us suffer … he wants to hunt us, catch us and then torture us to death with his bare hands … And that also means, that he is full of hatred … hatred that clouds his senses …

As expected, Nemesis came charging at Jill – just like last time. Jill dropped the AK-47 and grabbed her pistol. She dodged the incoming Nemesis to the left, then moved behind him and started firing from a close distance. However, Jill had not thought about how the monster had mutated by now. His tentacles grabbed her body, they were incredibly strong. Each of them was as strong as a well-trained man’s arm. Chained by tentacles and unable to move, Jill was lifted into the air, her toes leaving the ground. But Jill knew what to do and fired at the monster’s back.

She fired, again and again, until bloody flesh splattered to all sides, the once healed hole was now open again – and then she put a hand grenade into the re-opened wound.

The tentacles threw her away, her shoulder hit the concrete floor first. A second later, she could feel sharp pain overwhelming her. She felt nauseous. No doubt, a bone was broken.

She managed to stand up regardless – and started running. The safety pin clutched in her hand. Carlos also fired a grenade, everything else more or less happened simultaneously. The grenade in Nemesis' back exploded, and Carlos' grenade exploded near his feet. This caused a domino effect and the three barrels with the solvent also exploded.

The whole building was shaking, a fire-red flame moved towards the sky like a dragon. Nemesis was on fire, and he was lying face-forward on the ground, his torso was almost severed from the rest of his body. However, his arms were still moving and he desperately tried to crawl. The monster's cells tried to reanimate him, while the flames' embers turned more and more of his body into coal.

"STAAAAAARS!!" Nemesis cried out once again, but it was already his death cry, which was swallowed by the sound of a rotor coming closer.

"Finally! They're coming!" Carlos called and waved both arms towards the sky.

The transport helicopter landed, the sky started to light up in the east. Dawn had come.

"Quick!" Jill had the feeling that she knew the pilot who was waving at them from the cockpit.

"Come on, quick!" Jill jumped into the helicopter, Carlos was right behind her. The transport helicopter ascended. From above, the burned Nemesis looked just like a pile of half-burned charcoal.

"Barry! Nice to see you!" Jill said with a weak smile.

Barry Burton, second in command of the S.T.A.R.S. Alpha Team and good friend of Chris Redfield was piloting the helicopter and smiled back at her.

"I heard you were in trouble."

“When I contacted him via radio he immediately agreed to help us” Carlos praised him.

“Shocking that this is how we meet again.”

“You two know each other?” Carlos asked.

“We’re comrades” Jill answered proudly.

A missile was flying by, only a few meters away from the helicopter. It was on its direct way to Raccoon City, the place they had just escaped from – and, apparently, it had been last minute. A short time later, the missile reached the city centre. White, destructive lightning lit the surrounding environment.

Booooooooom…

A deep roll of thunder could be heard. A heatwave was spreading from the city’s centre, and everything in its way was turned into ashes within seconds. A mushroom cloud was moving towards the sky, its bottom tinted in a red colour from all the flames. Someone who had no idea about what had just happened might have found this beautiful to look at. However, it was like looking at deadly hellfire. All humans, animals, and plants within the city died immediately. At the end of the day, Raccoon City would have been wiped off all maps. The Umbrella Corporation would be held responsible – Jill was dead sure of this, at least. However, later, much later, it became clear that Raccoon City’s downfall was disguised as a nuclear accident.

They told the general public that a meltdown within a nuclear reactor had been the reason. An investigation committee started to look into the matter immediately and once they declared that a meltdown had caused everything, Jill’s world collapsed. Now it couldn’t be denied anymore that Umbrella had a huge influence on the US government.

Typical, Jill thought. They get off scot-free. However, in fact, Umbrella had already been on the way to its demise. Umbrella had only managed to cover up the truth via massive bribery, intimidation and blackmailing – a clear indication of their weakened condition. This affair had turned into a struggle for life and death, forcing the Umbrella Corporation to act desperate behind the scenes. No, they had not made it out of this

unharmed this time. This was indeed the beginning of the end for the Umbrella Corporation.

CONTINUES IN UMBRELLA CHRONICLES SIDE B…

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